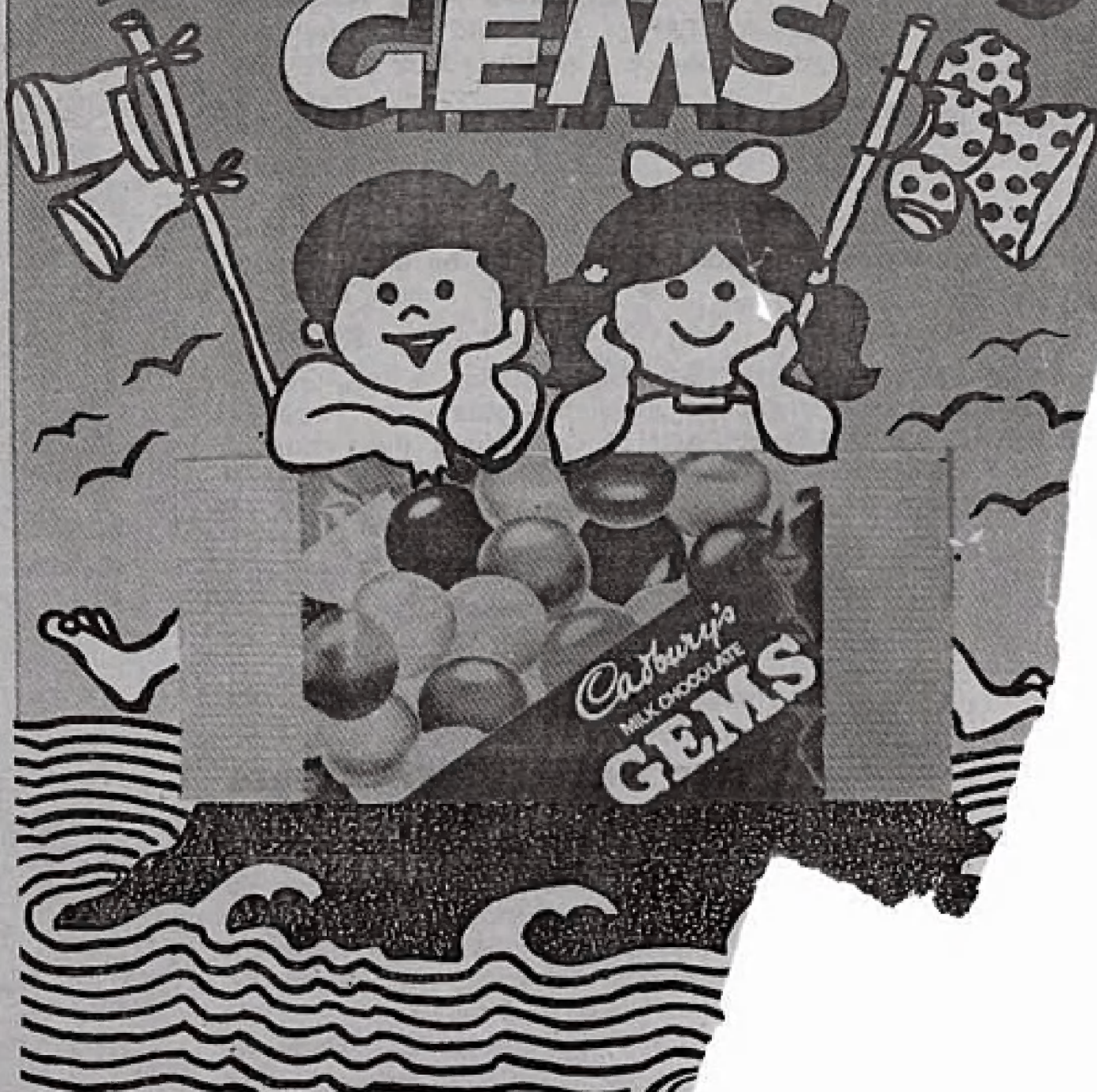


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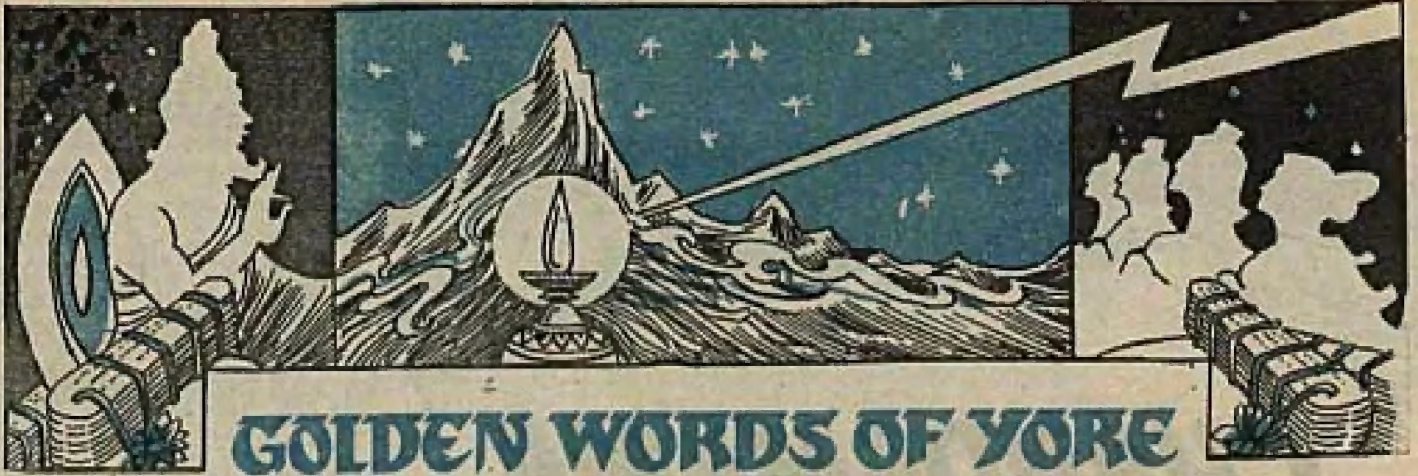
Founder : CHAKRAPANI



A GREAT CENTENARY

Born of an ancient noble family that migrated from Middle East to France, the Mother (1878-1973) of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, chose India as her country. She dedicated her life to explain Sri Aurobindo's vision to the world—a vision that gives us a new hope for the future of humanity—tells us that man is an evolving being and he is destined to surpass his present confused condition and step into an enlightened stage.

It is for you to read the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and appreciate them as you grow up. On the occasion of her Birth Centenary on the 21st February 1978 let us express our gratitude to her for her two great contributions which concern us all immediately: She impressed on us that India has a unique role to play for the future of humanity and we must prepare for that. Secondly she paved new ways in education for the integral development of man. The light she shed on education is attracting the attention of students and teachers all over the world.



उत्सवे व्यवने चंव दुर्भिक्षे शत्रुविग्रहे ।

राजद्वारे श्मशाने च यस्तिष्ठति स बान्धवः ॥

Utsave vyasane caiva durbhikṣe śatruvigrahe

Rājadvāre śmaśāne ca yastiṣṭhati sa bāndhavaḥ

True friend is he who stands by us in joy, in distress, in times of famine and attack by enemies, when we are summoned by the authority, and who accompanies us to the cremation ground when we are bereaved.

— *The Chanakya-ritih*

कराविव शरीरस्य नेत्रयोरिव पक्ष्मणी ।

अविचार्य प्रियं कुर्यात् तन्मित्रं मित्रमुच्यते ॥

Karāviva śarīrasya netrayoriva pakṣmaṇī

Avicārya priyam kuryāt tanmitram mitramucyate

Just as the hands serve the body and the eyelids serve the eyes spontaneously, so does a friend work for our good (without our asking for his service).

— *Subhasitaratnabhandagaram*

दुष्टा भार्या शठं मित्रं भृत्यश्चोत्तरदायकः ।

ससर्पे च गृहे वासो मृत्युरेव न संशयः ॥

Duṣṭā bhāryā śaṭham mitram bhṛtyaścottaradāyakaḥ

Sasarpe ca gr̥he vāso mṛtyureva na saṁśayaḥ

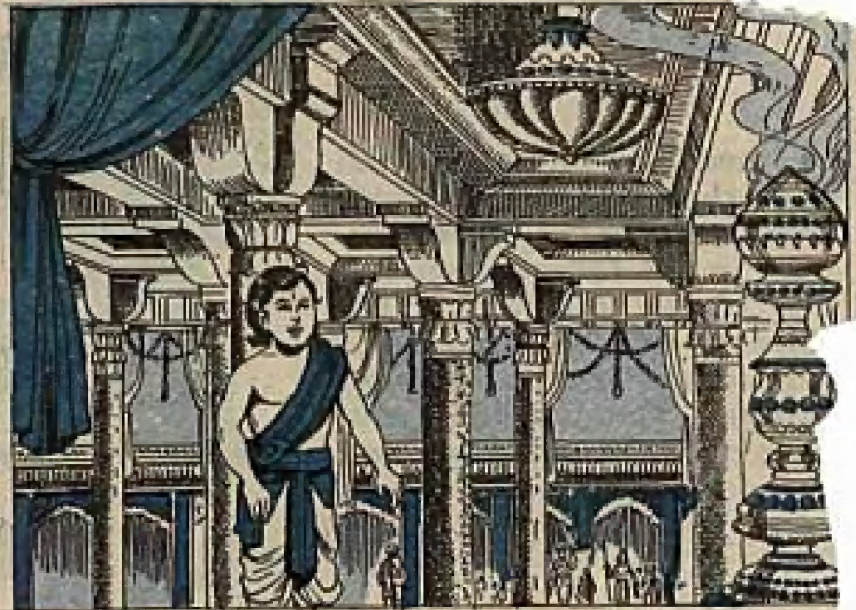
A wicked wife, to have one as a friend who can deceive, a servant who is unfaithful and a house with a snake living in it are equal to death.

— *The Hitopadeshaḥ*

HE WHO TURNED A STAR

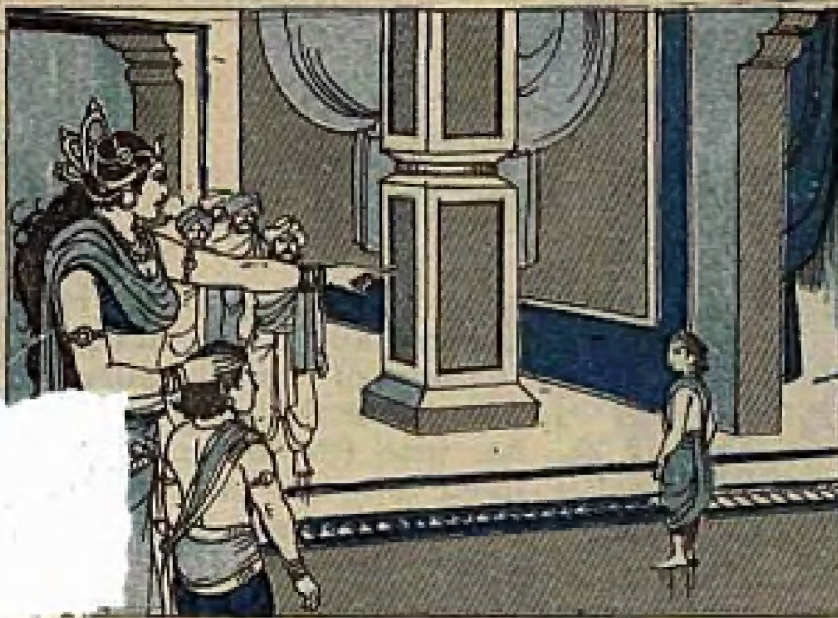
King Uttampada had two queens, Suniti and Suruchi. Jealous of Suniti, Suruchi influenced the king to her into the forest. lived in a hut in the where she gave birth a son, Dhruva.

When Dhruva grew up to be a young boy, he understood that he was King Uttampada's son. One festive day he approached the decorated palace. After some hesitation, he entered it.



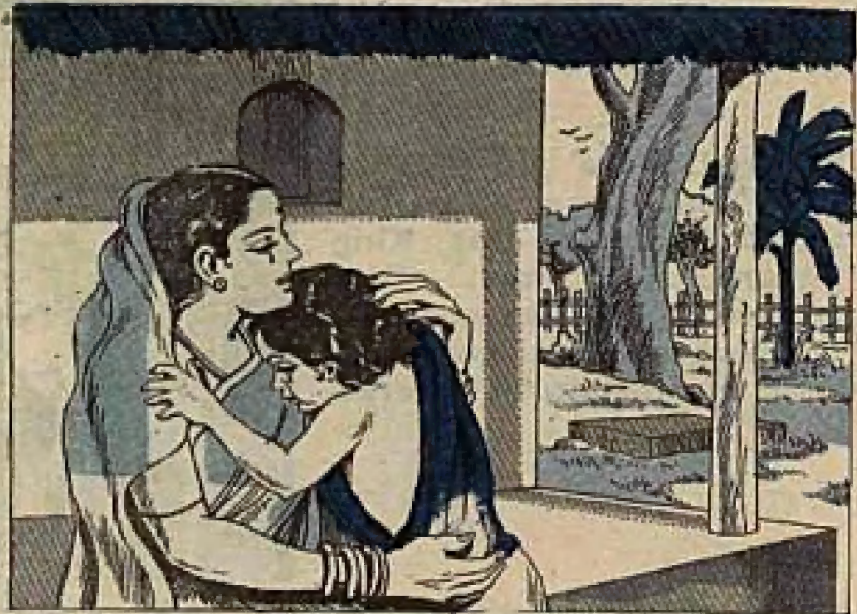
By and by Dhruva went near the king and introduced himself as his son. The king, with great joy, took Dhruva onto his lap. Dhruva was delighted.

But not for long.



Soon there appeared Suruchi with her son, Uttam. She was furious to see Dhruva on her husband's lap. "If anybody has the right to be there, it is my son, Uttam," she shouted and showed Dhruva the way out of the palace.

"I wanted to be happy with my father, the king. Instead, I was humiliated," Dhruva, back in the forest, complained to his mother. "My child, it is futile to expect happiness from human beings. God alone can save us from suffering and He alone can give us happiness," said Suniti.



Dhruva soon left his hut in quest of God. Deep inside the forest, he met seven sages and prostrated himself to them. "I was pushed off my father's lap. Grant me that I can occupy such a place which nobody else has ever enjoyed."

"You must pray Lord Vishnu to obtain the boon," advised the seven sages who were the seven stars—the Great Bear.

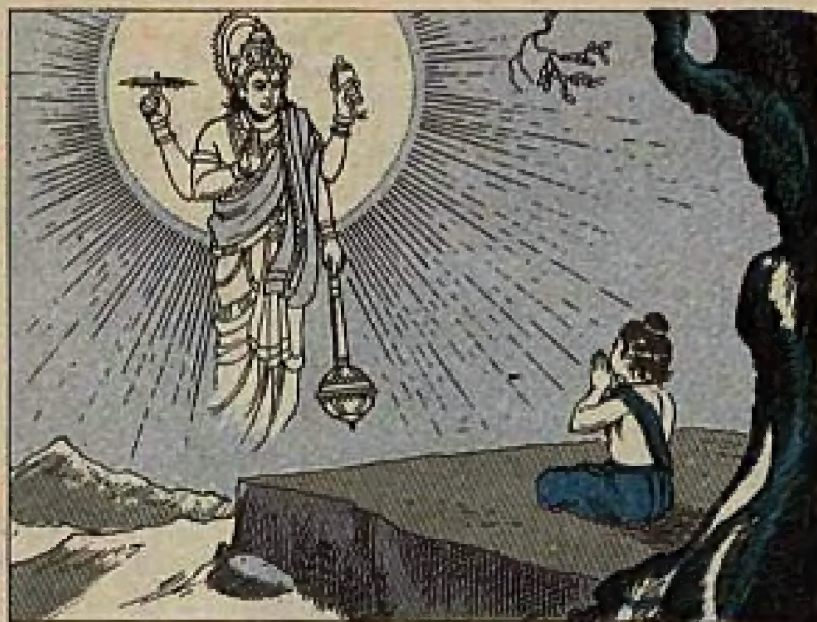
Dhruva sat down and meditated on Vishnu. Deep was his concentration and unshakable was his faith. Even storms could not sway him, nor could hunger or thirst disturb him.



Wild beasts who rushed at the boy-sage were struck by his calm and quiet figure. They slunk away. Even ghosts did not dare to harm him.

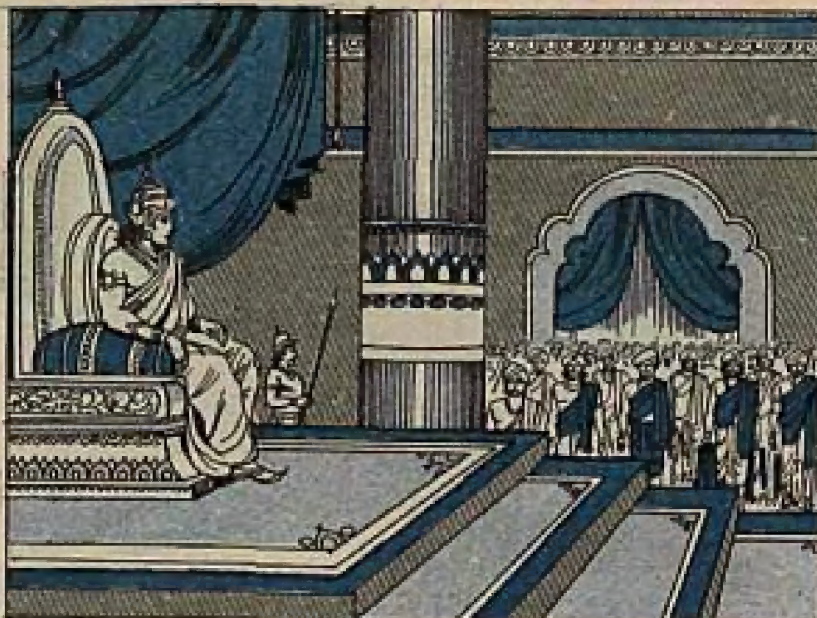
Even the gods were afraid of Dhruva's penance. He was gathering so much spiritual power that he could even conquer heaven thereby—they were afraid. They tried to divert his attention from God by making beautiful nymphs dance before him.





At last Vishnu appeared before Dhruva and offered to give him a boon. All Dhruva now wanted was to remain ever a devotee of Vishnu. The Lord granted that and also reminded him of what he had earlier asked of the sages. That too He granted.

Dhruva succeeded King Uttampada to throne. But he remained a devotee of the Lord forever—never forgetting Him even while engrossed in the business of ruling the kingdom.



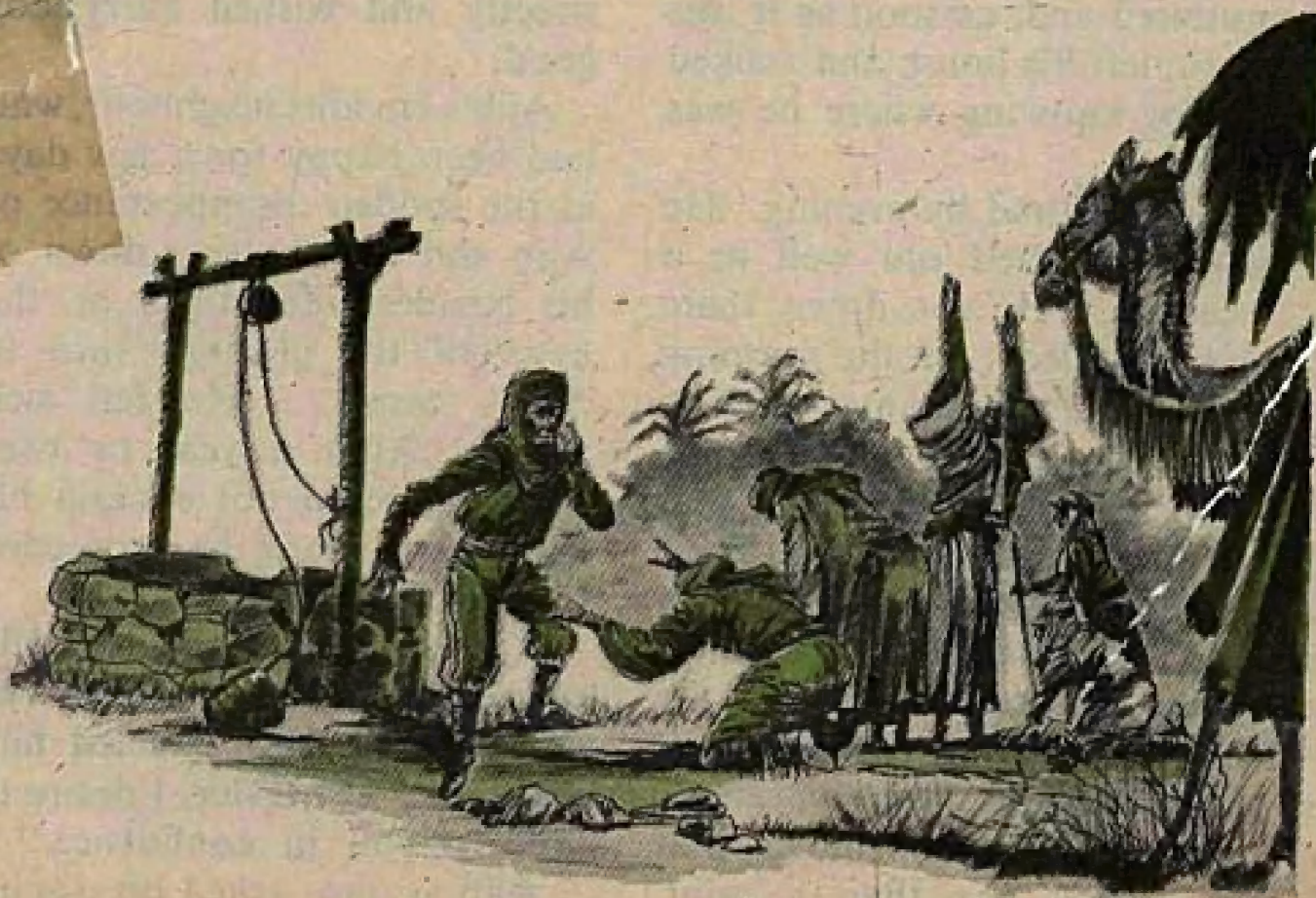
And years later, after his death, Dhruva occupied a place in the firmament that none had occupied. His spirit dwells eternally as the Pole-star—*Dhruva Nakshatra*.



In his small town Ajib, the young merchant, was as prosperous as he was popular. He was prosperous because he was honest. People trusted him; what they could buy from him, they would never buy from others. He was popular because he sympathised with others in their sorrow; he helped to solve their problems.

Ajib's neighbour, another merchant, was consumed with

envy. As Ajib grew richer, the neighbour grew thinner. Not that he lacked anything himself, but he was awfully jealous of Ajib's popularity and prosperity. He always wished Ajib ill, but Ajib was doing always well. The neighbour lost his appetite soon and began to suffer from sleeplessness, burning with agony. He always remained tense and anxious lest he should hear something still



better about Ajib. As a consequence, he ruined his health and took to bed.

One day the neighbour's wife met Ajib in private. The poor woman wept bitterly and told how her husband suffered on account of his prosperity. Ajib was stunned. He consoled the woman, saying, "I must soon hit upon some remedy for your husband's ailment. Go away and sorrow not."

Alone in the night, Ajib grew pensive. Soon he began to hate his own wealth and reputation. "Woe to me if I caused so much suffering to my neighbour," he muttered and, as soon as it was dawn, left his house and walked on not knowing where he was going.

He was tired by evening. He saw a deserted old well in a meadow. He sat down there and fell asleep. In the morning a batch of merchants on their way to the town saw him. Some of them recognised him and fed him and spoke to him. Their surprise knew no bound when they learnt that the young merchant Ajib had renounced the world. He was already well-known for his honesty. Now the merchants concluded that he was no less than a saint.

They left there a couple of their servants to cook for him and look after his comforts. In the nearby village they spread the news of the coming of the saint. The villagers lost no time in rushing to the meadow and building a house for Ajib.

In the town the merchants told all other merchants about the great change that had come over Ajib. Merchants of the town flocked to Ajib and built a cluster of houses on the meadow. They visited him often, with their families, to listen to his words of wisdom.

And Ajib, indeed, spoke sweetly and wished everybody good.

Ajib's envious neighbour, who had been happy for a few days at the sudden disappearance of Ajib and the shutting down of his business, despaired at the news of the glorious turn in Ajib's career. He fell sick again. After a year or two, when he could not contain his agony any more, he proceeded to meet Ajib.

Ajib sat in a spacious hall, surrounded by his disciples. The envious neighbour greeted him and said, "O Master, I desire to talk to you in confidence."

Ajib at once asked his discip-

les to leave the hall.

"Ajib, don't you recognise me? I am your neighbour who always wished you well. Now, I have to tell you something very important, but I hesitate to do so inside the house. Why not we take a walk?" proposed the neighbour.

"Why not," said Ajib. Both went out into the meadow behind the house. It was evening and the disciples could not see them. The neighbour led Ajib to the well and under the pre-

text of showing him something strange in the water, gave him a sudden push.

Ajib toppled into the deep well. Sure that he was gone forever, the neighbour returned home as fast as he could.

Ajib who did not know swimming would have surely drowned and died but for some helpful spirits who lived in the well. They were happy that the meadow around their well had become famous. They also knew that it was on account of Ajib.



It took time for Ajib to realise that if he did not sink, it was because the spirits showed their backs and he landed on them. Then he found a slab of stone and sat upon it.

"We are happy to have you amidst us," said the leader of the spirits. "Because of you the sultan is coming here tomorrow."

"Is he?" Ajib expressed surprise.

"Of course, being a saint you know that his daughter is possessed by an evil spirit and the sultan, disappointed with all sorts of treatment, is coming to seek your help to save the princess," said the spirit.

"I see," was the only comment Ajib could make.

"And of course you know that the cure is in your black pet cat. All you have to do is to pick a pair of hair from its mustachio and burn them on a saucer and hold the smoke close to the golden nose of the princess!" said the head spirit.

"Thank you. Now I know," said Ajib.

Ajib's disciples were looking for him with great anxiety. In the morning they saw him emerging out of the well. This was possible by the help of the

spirits who remained invisible. Ajib's disciples took this as a feat of miracle by their master, for nobody could climb down or up that well without the help of a ladder.

Back in the house, the first thing Ajib did was to pluck a pair of hair from his black cat's mustachio and keep them handy.

Soon after the sunrise the royal bodyguards came running and announced that the sultan was on his way to meet Ajib. And soon the sultan arrived there and after the exchange of greetings, said, "I thought it was my duty to meet the great soul."

"You are meeting me on account of your daughter," observed Ajib.

"I am satisfied that I cannot hide anything from the great soul. I am overwhelmed," said the sultan, on the verge of tears.

"I hope to be able to cure the princess if she is brought here," Ajib consoled the sultan. The princess was duly brought there and Ajib burnt the couple of hair and with the smoke freed the princess from the spirit that possessed her. The princess who was laughing and behaving wildly grew calm and

looked at everybody as if suddenly awakened from a deep sleep.

The sultan's joy knew no bound. "I don't know how to reward this young saint," the sultan said looking at his old vizier.

"You ought to know how to, my lord, for six months ago you, in your despair, had told me that whosoever can cure the girl can marry her. I would not have reminded you of this had this young saint not looked like the most eligible bridegroom!"

"You are the greatest of all viziers the world has known," exclaimed the Sultan.

The young saint, Ajib, did not grumble at the proposal. In fact, he seemed quite pleased.

The marriage, needless to say, was a great event.

And soon thereafter the sultan died leaving the throne to Ajib.

Upon learning what happened to Ajib, the envious neighbour turned almost mad. One day, while wandering with his entourage, Sultan Ajib saw the fellow loitering in tattered clothes. Ajib recognised him all right and asked one of his officers to arrange for the fellow's treatment and to give him a thousand pieces of gold when he got well.

"I owe my sultanate to this man," Ajib told his entourage.





MYSTERY OF THE CHANGING TASTE

The nawab of Golconda was out on a hunting expedition. His lieutenants had led him into a forest at the frontier of his state which the sultan had never visited before.

But what the lieutenants had failed to take note of was the fact that there was no water readily available in that forest. By noon the nawab felt thirsty. The members of his party ran helter skelter, looking for water. One of them climbed a hillock and surveyed the area. He saw a kingfisher a furlong away. That gave him hope about the presence of water nearby.

Upon his report the nawab advanced in the kingfisher's direction. Soon he came across a beautiful orchard. He entered it and was warmly received by a hermit.

The orchard was situated on

the bank of a small lake. The nawab's bodyguards fetched water from it and the nawab's thirst was satiated.

The nawab viewed the orchard with appreciation. His eyes fell on a pomegranate tree abounding in big and beautiful fruits. He had never seen pomegranates of that lovely quality.

The hermit lost no time in plucking a ripe pomegranate. He crushed it and offered its juice to his royal guest. The nawab relished every drop of it and thanked the host heartily.

But as soon as he set down the empty vessel, he remembered the law of his land which obliged people who raised orchards to pay a special tax to his government. Was this hermit paying the tax all right? He wondered.

In the meanwhile the hermit

had crushed another pomegranate. He offered the fruit-juice to the nawab for the second time.

The nawab took a sip, but said, "How is it, O hermit, that this juice does not taste as delicious as the juice I took earlier? Did you not pluck the fruit from the same tree?"

"Both the fruits came from the same tree. But it is natural that two different persons should find the taste to be different!" commented the hermit.

"Your words puzzle me, O hermit. There are no two different persons. I drank both the times!" observed the nawab with an element of surprise in his voice.

"My lord! You alone can say whether you were the same person when you drank the juice for the second time. You alone

should know if you had not changed," said the hermit politely.

The clever nawab got the hint. He realised that when he drank the juice first time, all he had in his mind was pure gratitude. By the time he came to drink for the second time, his mind was clouded with a worldly and selfish question. He was not the same person.

The nawab smiled and thanked the hermit for the lesson he received from him. Back at his capital, the first thing he did was to change the law of taxation. People were not required to pay taxes on account of growing fruits. But more than that, he changed himself. He always responded to kind words and thoughts in others with generous gestures from his own side.



The Prince and the Wizard

"Long live our sweet princess!" shouted the colourfully dressed fellow at the head of the procession. "Long live!" responded the crowd, dancing, singing and whistling.

They had reason to be happy, for that was the birthday of Princess Prativa, King Bhuvan-singh's only child. The whole city of Sundarpur was in a festive mood, flowers and flags decorating every house. Sweets were being distributed from various points in the city and dancers and magicians kept the crowds amused at different places.

"Long live the princess!" shouted a man.

"Long live Samser!" added another.

"Samser? What makes you bring in his name?" asked the first man.

"Why! Don't you know that the king and the queen have chosen him to marry the princess?" replied the second man.

"Is that so? What a pity that a fairy like our princess should marry an imp like Samser!" commented the first man.

"Tut, tut, fellow, keep mum unless you are ready to lose your tongue. Samser has spies everywhere. Don't forget that he is the queen's nephew and our future king," whispered the second man.

While passing before the castle the crowd grew louder and their voices echoed and re-echoed in the walls and the towers of the castle. The beaming princess appeared on the terrace, flanked by her maids. The crowd greeted her with lusty cheers.

She waved to them, but she could not linger on the terrace because the august assembly of noblemen of the kingdom was waiting to congratulate her in the court.

As she disappeared from the terrace, the crowd too moved away. Only two young men were seen standing spell-bound, although their visions were turned in different directions.

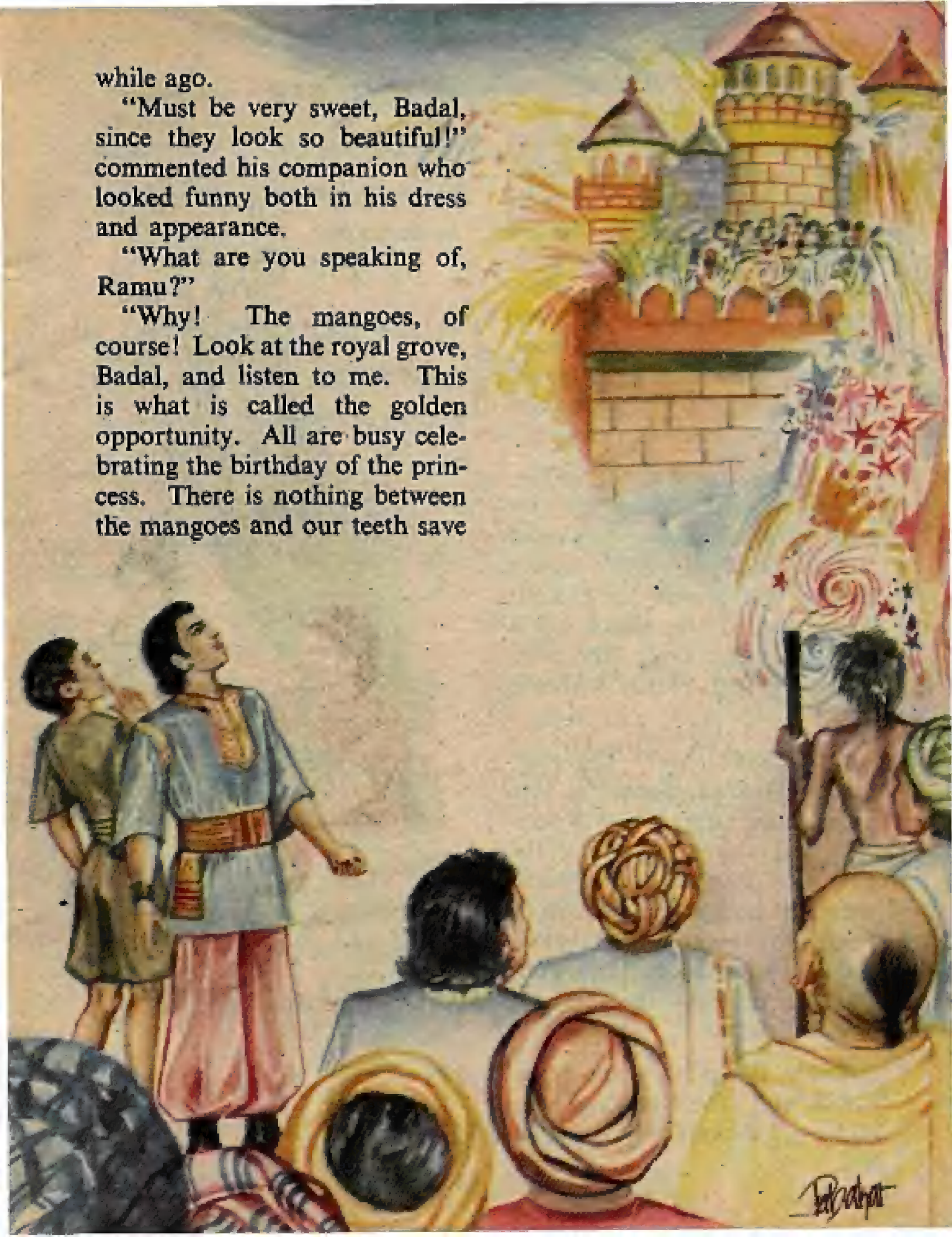
"How sweet!" muttered the young man who looked dignified and handsome. His eyes were still fixed on the terrace where stood the princess a little

while ago.

"Must be very sweet, Badal, since they look so beautiful!" commented his companion who looked funny both in his dress and appearance.

"What are you speaking of, Ramu?"

"Why! The mangoes, of course! Look at the royal grove, Badal, and listen to me. This is what is called the golden opportunity. All are busy celebrating the birthday of the princess. There is nothing between the mangoes and our teeth save



the wall which we can scale so easily."

Ramu dragged Badal away.

Inside the castle the court was packed with the nobility. To the left of the king sat the queen and to his right the princess. After a graceful performance by a troupe of dancers, the minister announced, "Now, the noblemen of our kingdom will be happy to present their gifts to our gracious princess!"

And the aristocrats came forward, one after another, with gifts galore. They were splendid and marvellous. There was a golden bird which could sing! There was a saree which could pass through a ring. The princess, delighted, played with the gifts.

"Hah hah! Hey!" The gleeful laughter was Samser's. He drew his seat closer to the princess and started handling the gifts as if to show to the audience that he had the right to be free with anything that belonged to the princess. But gone was the smile of the princess. She sat glum.

"Now, our pundits and poets would sing the glory of our princess," announced the minister.

*Our princess is as graceful
as a lily,
To compare her to anything
less would be silly!*

sang one of the poets, who got an applause.

*To compare the princess to
a lily is silly,
For lily is born of mud;
she is born royally!*

sang another poet who got a greater applause.



*To behold the princess is a
boon,
She is as charming as the
moon!*

sang a third poet who too was
well appreciated.

*But the fickle moon wanes
and waxes,
Whereas ever steady is our
princess!*

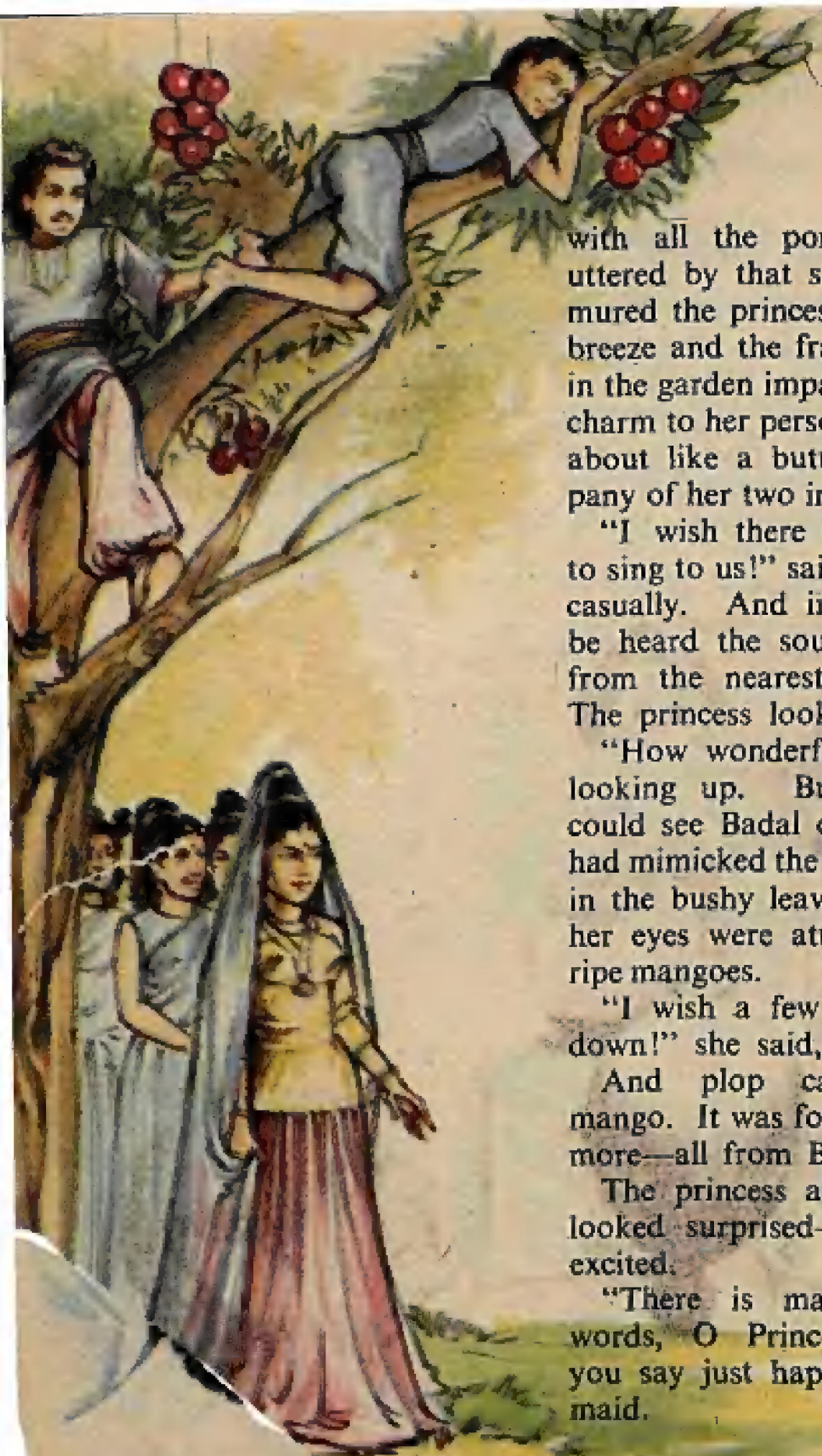
sang the fourth poet who too
drew hearty appreciation, but
a fifth scholar cut in immediately:

*Like the full moon the
princess smiles,
And like the sun Samser
shines!*

The tribute was applauded
by the queen, and Samser him-
self joined her with great enthu-
siasm. Bright with pride, he
looked at the princess. But lo!
the regal seat beside him was
empty. The princess had slip-
ped away. Samser's face paled.

"How boring is the court





with all the pompous words uttered by that silly lot" murmured the princess. The sweet breeze and the fragrant flowers in the garden imparted a greater charm to her person. She flitted about like a butterfly in company of her two intimate maids.

"I wish there were cuckoos to sing to us!" said the princess casually. And instantly could be heard the sound of cooing from the nearest mango tree. The princess looked thrilled.

"How wonderful!" she said, looking up. But before she could see Badal or Ramu who had mimicked the cuckoo hiding in the bushy leaves at the top, her eyes were attracted to the ripe mangoes.

"I wish a few mangoes fell down!" she said, giggling.

And plop came down a mango. It was followed by two more—all from Badal.

The princess and her maids looked surprised—and no less excited.

"There is magic in your words, O Princess, whatever you say just happens!" said a maid.

"Princess!" a stern voice called from above a mound a few yards away. It was Samser who stood on the mound heroically, his hands on his waist from where dangled a sword of impressive size.

"How did you dare to run away from that august gathering?" demanded the angry Samser.

The princess and her maids turned to look at him. And what should their eyes meet but a large tiger crouching below the mound, surveying them with interest!

Their eyes expressed horror. That flattered Samser who concluded that their fear was due to his angry mood.

"Hah! hah! Hey! Don't panic, Princess, I mean no harm. After all, you are the moon and I am the sun!" said Samser affably.

The tiger now gave out a growl.

"Please save us!" shouted a maid. "A tiger!"

Only then Samser looked down and noticed the fearful beast. He jumped up like one who was kicked at the back and gave out a howl and was gone the next moment.

The princess and her maids looked at each other, helpless.

From the tiger came another growl.

Suddenly Badal hopped down from the tree and took position between the tiger and the damsels. He was followed by Ramu.

"Do not fear, O Princess, I will never let the beast harm you!" said Badal as he whipped out a dazzling knife from his belt. Fixing his gaze on the tiger he told Ramu, "This is the one that was recently captured from the forest for the royal zoo. It must have escaped from its cage. Run and inform the zoo-keeper!"

-To be continued



JANESWAR

It was evening. A father was returning home with his three young sons and a little daughter from a temple near Nasik.

It was only recently that they had settled down in a nearby village. They were yet to be acquainted with the roads and landmarks of the area.

They lost their way and entered a forest.

"Father, I hear a growl!" whispered one of the three boys. The father, Vithalpanth, grew attentive. Yes, what he heard was the growl of a fearful beast.

They had just taken a turn when the growl suddenly grew into a roar. And before their eyes a tiger pounced upon a buffalo.

They ran in a different direction as fast as they could. Soon they were out of the forest. But instead of any relief they were shocked to find that one of them—the eldest of the boys was missing!

Light twinkled in their village a furlong away. Had the boy run very fast and reached home before them? There was some hope in this thought. But that

could not sustain them for long. The boy was not at home—they found out soon.

The villagers cooperated in their search for the boy in the forest. But he could not be traced.

While his parents were drowned in sorrow, the boy, whose name was Nivrittinath, reappeared after a few days. He had a strange tale to tell. He had run deep into the forest in fear of the tiger. A beam of light led him into a cave. Inside, an old yogi was as if waiting for him. He received the boy with great warmth and initiated him to yoga a couple of days later. He imparted to the young disciple many a secret of the mystic path.

Nivrittinath gave out the name of his guru as Gahininath.

All were stunned. Gahininath was a great yogi. It was not easy to meet him. Lucky indeed was the boy for whom the great yogi's compassion came in that strange way.

Vithalpanth, a seeker of God himself, was delighted at his son's luck.

Vithalpanth would certainly have been much more delighted had he lived to see his second son, Jnanadev, being initiated by Nivrittinath a few years later. In fact, Gahininath had already confided to Nivrittinath that the young Jnanadev was a chosen soul and it was the elder brother's duty to take care of his spiritual growth.

Soon the two brothers attracted the attention of the true seekers. Nivrittinath, the guru, remained in the background, always bestowing on Jnanadev, his younger brother and disciple, all his goodwill and blessings.

Jnanadev had begun to manifest powers which only highly accomplished yogis could. For example, once while travelling, they came to spend a night in a shrine where a renowned guru of the time lay dying. All the efforts of physicians had failed to cure the old guru. Jnanadev was moved at the patient's suffering. He sat down by his side and meditated. The old guru recovered. He had the insight to realise that he was saved by the young Jnanadev's spiritual power.

But Nivrittinath warned Jnanadev against using his



power for bringing benefit to a few individuals. He must use his genius in such a way that innumerable people should feel enlightened thereby.

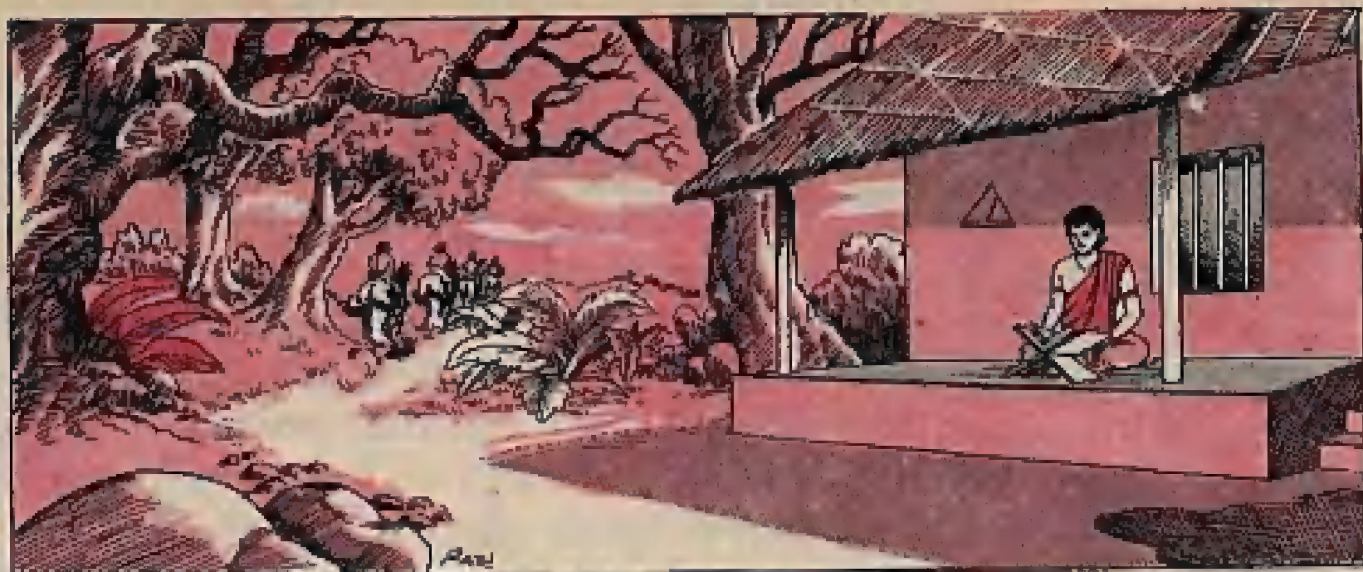
Jnanadev appreciated his guru's concern. He devoted himself to the composition of an elucidation of the Gita. It was an approach that was remarkable for combining knowledge and devotion. Jnanadev was only nineteen when he wrote it, but soon it was to become famous as the *Jnaneswari Gita*. Since the time of its composition in the 13th century, it has exercised great influence on the people of Maharashtra.

Jnanadev and his guru came

to Pandharpur, the seat of Lord Vithobha. It was a place where many seekers had settled down. In no time did Jnanadev—who had by then come to be known as Jnaneswara—become their leader. He was then twenty. But scholars and yogis senior to him by decades came to accept him as a master. Jnaneswara composed lyrics remarkable for their simplicity and profundity. Moreover, they were charged by the power of his own sincerity. They are still sung with emotion by the devotees throughout Maharashtra.

Jnaneswara left his body when he was only twentyone.





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

THE DULL PRINCE

The king had gone into the forest with all his four sons to hunt birds and beasts for sport. The king was a great shot. Arrows flew from his bow like strings of lightning and they hardly missed their marks.

The eldest prince was equal to his father in marksmanship. If the king killed two tigers and one boar, he killed two boars and one tiger.

The second prince and the third were not lagging far behind. With great enthusiasm they brought down bird after bird from the trees and felled deer after deer.

But it was quite different with the fourth prince. He was most reluctant to shoot. If he shot at all, he missed the mark. His

face showed no glow of enthusiasm.

At the day's end the king relaxed beside a waterfall and took stock of his sons' achievements. He was proud of his eldest son, quite happy with the next two sons, but thoroughly disappointed with the fourth one. "I ought to feel ashamed of him," he murmured to himself.

The evening was approaching. The king bade the members of his party to proceed to the palace, carrying the preys with them. Only a few bodyguards and his sons remained with him. He proposed to spend some time with a great sage who lived in the forest. The king held him in very high esteem. From time

to time he met the sage, either to seek his blessings to tide over some crisis or just to pay respect to him.

A little after the sunset the king and his party reached the sage's dwelling which was made up of a cave and a few huts. They prostrated themselves to the sage and the sage's disciples entertained them to delicious fruits and milk.

After that, as was the practice, all left the king alone with the sage.

"What is the matter, my dear king, why do you look pensive?" the sage asked.

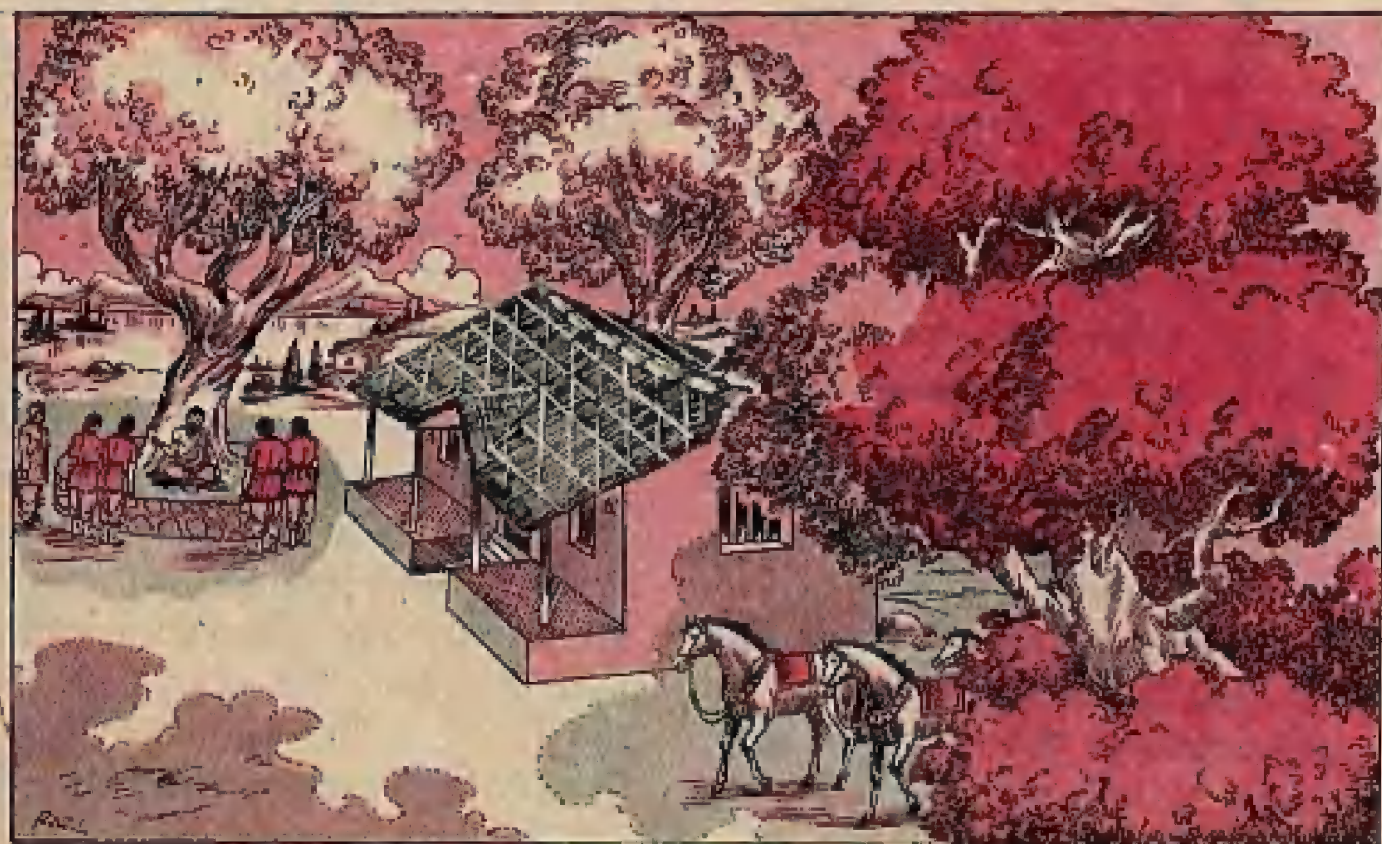
"You have guessed my mood correctly, O blessed soul!" rep-

lied the king. "I am worried on account of my youngest son. He is so dull! I wonder what I am going to do with a good-for-nothing boy like him."

"What makes you think that he is dull and good-for-nothing?" queried the sage.

"Not one, but numerous reasons are there to think so, O sage," replied the king. "For example, each one of my other three sons bagged so many beasts and birds while hunting in the forest today, but he failed to bag any."

"I see," said the sage. He then called the youngest prince and asked him how is it that he could not kill a single creature.



The prince looked remorseful and answered in a soft voice, "To kill just for sport is useless, O great soul!"

While the youngest prince and the sage were talking the king had summoned his other three sons. With all the four princes standing before them, the king whispered to the sage, "I will give all the four of them the same work. I am almost sure, the youngest will take longer to do it than the rest."

The king then gave one guava to each prince and said, "Go in different directions. Eat the fruit when and where no one was observing you."

The princes dispersed. The

eldest prince returned in ten minutes, and said triumphantly, "I went near the stream. No one was there. I ate the guava."

The second prince returned a few minutes later. "I went near the stream. But in the moonlight I saw a monkey watching me. I left the place and hiding myself behind a bush, ate the fruit," he said.

The third prince arrived soon thereafter and said, "I am sorry being a little late. But I knew that owls can see at night and there were plenty of them in this area. So I went into the meadow and ate the fruit."

The sage and the king asked the three princes to return to



the palace. The two sat waiting for the youngest prince. A long time passed.

"Did I not tell you how dull he was? See for yourself how long he takes to do such a simple thing!" the king remarked to the sage.

Hours passed. The youngest prince returned at last—but not long before the dawn! And he had the guava still in his hand.

"You failed to find a place where none would see you eating the guava, eh, you fool?" burst out the king.

The prince looked at him with sad eyes, but kept quiet.

But the sage stood up and received the boy with great warmth and said, "If my insight is not wrong, I know what you have to say even though you don't care to say it. But

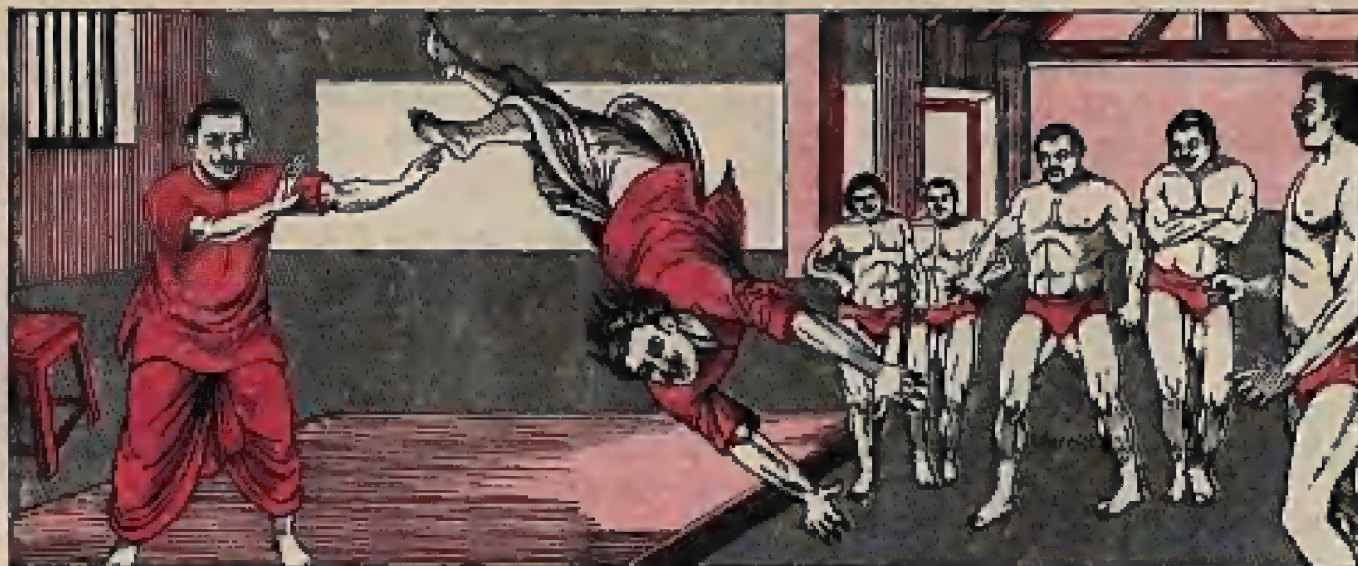
I request you to give the reason for your not eating the guava. Please speak out!"

"O great soul! I had been asked to eat the fruit when and where no one observed me. I failed. When is the time when God does not observe me? Where is the place which was beyond his ken?" answered the prince.

The sage embraced him and said, looking at the king, "O King, this boy is not meant for you. He is a great soul who was born in your family out of compassion for you. Go back leaving him here."

In a moment the king realised his error. He was eager to take back the prince. But the prince had realised his true destiny. He did not go. He remained with the sage and became a yogi.





THE NOVEL TRICK

There was a time when wrestling was practised in many towns of India. Champapur was such a town. The chief wrestler of the town, Parvat Malla, ran a regular school where he taught his art to young aspirants. Among his disciples were two promising wrestlers, Bhargava and Shuraverma.

Parvat Malla was a sincere teacher. He taught all the trainees with equal attention. But Bhargava and Shuraverma, being more sincere, learnt the art better than the others.

One day a stranger came rushing into the gymnasium and said harshly, "Parvat Malla! I have met some of your ex-students. They do not know

much of wrestling. Yet they claim to have completed their training!"

Bhargava who heard the stranger's comment got furious. He suddenly caught hold of the stranger and threw him flat on the ground. The stranger lay sprawled for a moment. He then got up and left the place quietly.

As time passed the incident was forgotten. Bhargava and Shuraverma completed their course of training and went out in search of jobs. On reaching Pataliputra they heard that according to the tradition of the place a wrestler who can defeat the court wrestler could automatically occupy the position.



Both Shuraverma and Bhargava were equally efficient in their art. However, since only one could be appointed at a time, Shuraverma offered the chance of fighting the court wrestler to Bhargava.

The contest continued for a long time. No wrestler had been able to stand before the court wrestler for more than a few minutes. So, the king and the courtiers praised Bhargava. But despite applying all his tricks, Bhargava could not defeat the court wrestler. The court wrestler knew how to combat every move Bhargava made.

The contest ended undecided. Next day Shuraverma challenged the court wrestler to a trial of strength. Hardly had they come face to face when Shuraverma took hold of the court wrestler and threw him down flat. The court wrestler lay still for some time. The king declared him defeated and appointed Shuraverma as the new court wrestler.

At night Bhargava complained to his friend, "I never thought that our teacher, Parvata Malla, would be partial to you and teach you principles which he did not teach me!"

"It is unkind of you to make such comments on our teacher. The principle which I applied to defeat the court wrestler had not been taught by our teacher, but by another wrestler," said Shuraverma.

Bhargava obtained the address of the wrestler and proceeded to meet him. The wrestler told Bhargava, "The principle which I taught your friend had been formulated by another wrestler who earns his livelihood as a butcher at Suvalnagar."

Bhargava was determined to learn the principle from its very originator. He proceeded to

Suvalnagar and traced the butcher.

But they were surprised to meet each other. Each looked familiar to the other. Upon Bhargava telling the butcher about the purpose of his visit, the butcher burst into laughter and said, "My dear friend! What fun it is that you should come to me in order to learn a trick which I had learnt from you!"

Bhargava looked bewildered. The butcher said again, "Don't you recognise me? Years ago I had once entered your teacher's gymnasium to challenge his students to a wrestling bout. Suddenly you threw me down. I returned, musing on the experience. I developed a principle out of the experience. I teach no new trick. The only trick is to apply the usual method of throwing the rival

down—just a second before he is prepared to face it. There is a moment when your rival is expecting your attack. But you must be clever enough to attack him just a second before that. If you attack him much early, you will be found out and declared disqualified. But if you know the right moment which is neither early nor late, you will emerge victorious!"

After a pause, the butcher said again. "Your friend, Shuraverma is clever. He allowed you to wrestle first. He observed the Court-wrestler's ability carefully. He realised that it will be impossible to defeat the court-wrestler in the normal way. So, when his own turn came, he resorted to to the trick I had taught him!"

Bhargava left the place with great amazement.





THE LAST DAYS

In the 1st century the small city of Pompeii in Italy was the haunt of the rich Romans. The city had excellent baths, wine-stores and facilities for amusements.

Glaucus, a Greek youth, loved a charming girl, Ione. But Ione and her brother, Apaecides, were the wards of a wealthy and influential fellow named Arbaces. In fact, Arbaces himself desired to marry Ione.

A slave girl, Nydia, is rescued from her cruel master by Glaucus. She loves Glaucus, unknown to him.

When Arbaces comes to know that his ward Ione and Glaucus are in love with each other, he leads Ione to his own palatial house and tries to force her into marrying him. The good Nydia informs Glaucus in time. Glaucus rushes to the palace of Arbaces. The two are locked in a fight. But just then an earthquake occurs and a statue

falls on the head of Arbaces, knocking him down unconscious.

Glaucus was sure that the accident had killed Arbaces. But it had not. He regained sense and was out to avenge his humiliation. One night he kills Ione's brother, Apaecides, and passes on the blame to Glaucus. Glaucus is arrested and thrown into prison.

Those were the days when slaves were trained to fight as gladiators for the amusement of the citizens. Also, in the arena of entertainment, hungry beasts were let loose on prisoners whom the authorities wished to die. Glaucus was to be fed to a lion.

On the day of the entertainment, after other performances are over, Glaucus, permitted to use a knife to protect himself, is made to face the lion. The lion, however, is in no mood to attack the young man.

OF POMPEII



In the meanwhile it has been revealed that Apaecides was murdered not by Glaucus but by Arbaces. The audience now demands that Arbaces be thrown before the lion. They must not go without fun!

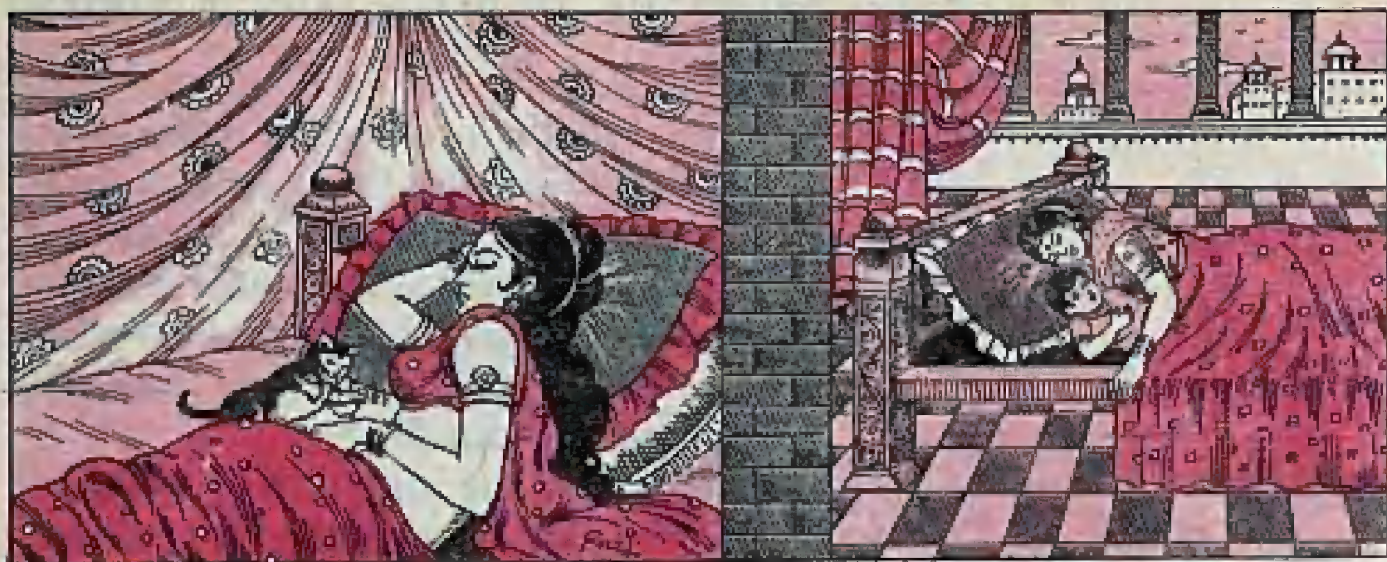
But the situation is resolved by an unexpected occurrence. The great volcano of Vésuvius, overlooking the city, has erupted. A huge flood of lava is rolling down to engulf the city. Glowing rocks shoot up high and come down on the city, killing thousands. The whole city is being reduced to a huge sepulchre!

But the sweet Nydia has led Glaucus and Ione to safety. The three board a small boat and escape the curse of Nature that destroyed the lustful city.

But in the morning it is found that Nydia is missing. As she loved Glaucus, she had decided to leave Glaucus and Ione alone.

And happy, no doubt, Glaucus and Ione become. They marry and settle down in Athens.

Written in the thirties of the last century, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1805-1873), *The Last Days of Pompeii* remains a classic among the English historical novels.



Two Queens and A Prince

This happened long long ago. There was a certain king who married for the second time when his first queen failed to give birth to any child.

The king as well as his subjects were delighted when they learnt that the younger queen was expecting a child. Their delight increased when the maids of the elder queen announced that she too was expecting a child.

A strange rumour spread around this time. It was said that in a forest bordering the kingdom an elephant had given birth to a camel! Some people said that such queer happenings indicated the coming of bad times. Others observed that nothing was impossible in this

world; even more queer things have happened in the past.

A few months later both the queens were interned in their rooms for delivery. The elder queen was found to have given birth to a bonny prince. But, on coming to sense, the younger queen saw that all she had given birth to was a kitten!

"If a camel could be born of an elephant no wonder that a human mother should give birth to a cat!" was the comment that people generally made.

The younger queen was stunned. However, the king and the court rejoiced at the birth of an heir. Nobody paid much attention to the anguish of the younger queen.

Time passed. One day an

astrologer visited the court. The king requested him to prepare the prince's horoscope. He was sent to the elder queen's apartment where he studied the stars which presided over the prince's birth.

After a while the astrologer sighed and said, "I am sorry to tell you, O queen, that the boy is destined to be brought up not by his mother, but by another woman. And that woman shall die soon."

The elder queen was shocked. "How to avert such a possibility?" she asked in her anxiety.

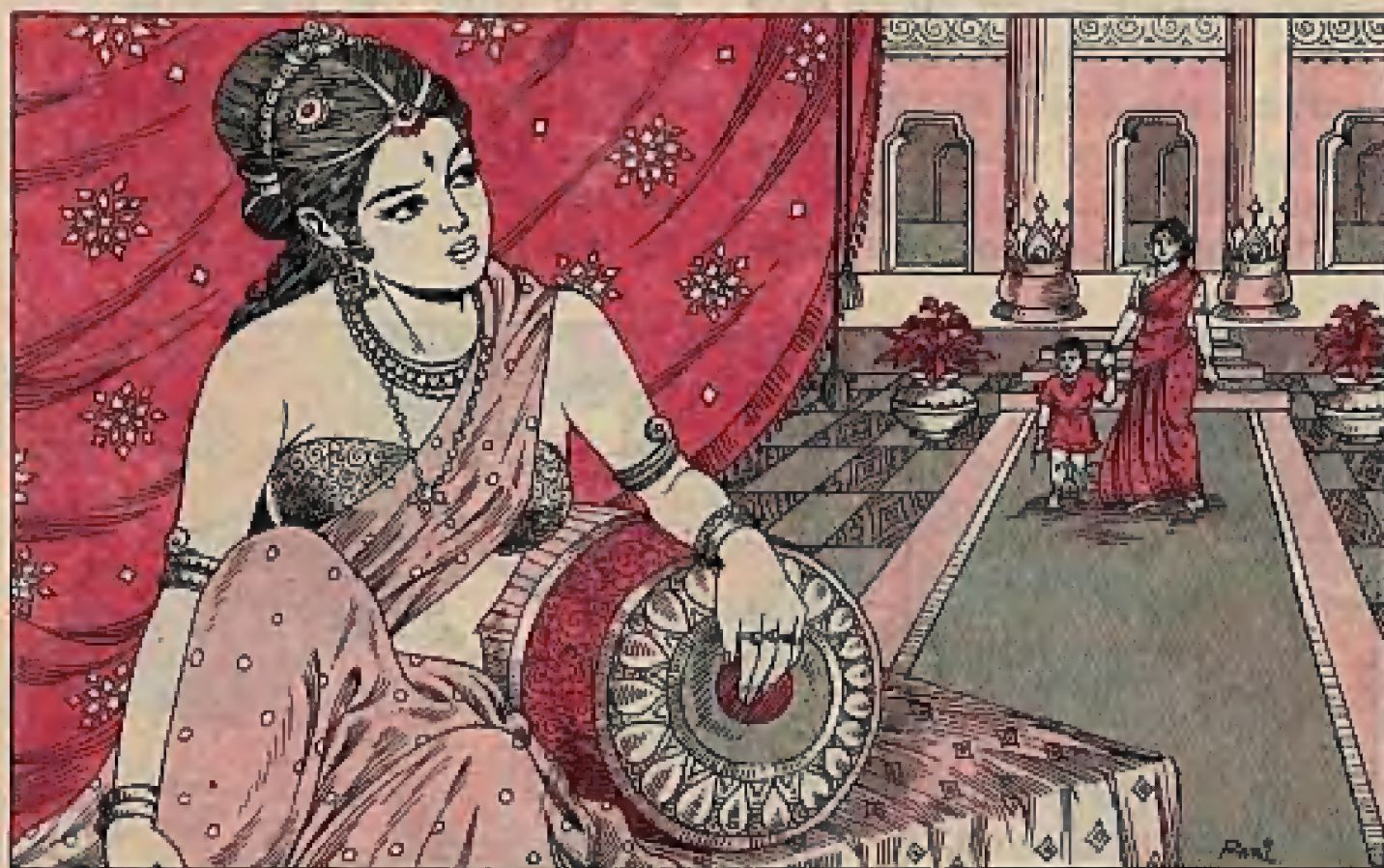
"It would have been easy for me to deceive you and claim

some reward by promising some false remedy. But I should not do so. What I have predicted is unavoidable," replied the astrologer.

"What is the way out then?" asked the elder queen again.

"When the circumstances shall be so arranged that the child's care would pass on to the hands of one who is not her mother, she must be prepared to die," said the astrologer.

The elder queen went into the younger queen's apartment as soon as the astrologer departed. With tears in her eyes, she said, "Listen, my sister, this child belongs to both of us.



Let him be brought up by you."

"Thanks, my sister. But I have heard what the astrologer said. I do not wish to die so soon," replied the younger queen.

"You will not die, my sister," said the elder queen, tears flowing down her cheeks. "You are the prince's true mother. According to the astrologer's prediction, it is not the mother, but the other woman who would bring up the child shall die!"

The elder queen then confessed of the deception she had played on the younger queen. Through her maids she had spread the false news that she too was expecting a child. As soon as the younger queen gave birth to the prince, her maids carried the child to the elder queen's lap and placed a kitten beside the younger queen.

"I had guessed so. My suspi-

cion grew stronger when I understood that the rumour that an elephant had given birth to a camel had been spread by your maids. That, I thought, had been done to prepare the minds of the people to take as natural what was most unnatural, that is, my giving birth to a kitten!" said the younger queen.

The elder queen kept quiet and continued to weep. But the younger queen embraced her and said, "You must pardon me for the deception I have practised on you. The astrologer was a courtier of my father. It was I who brought him here and briefed him what he should say to bring out the truth."

She then added, "But, be sure, the prince is as much your son as he is mine. In fact, the people need not know whether he was born of you or I".



THE STOLEN TUMBLER

The young Rasik seemed quite enthusiastic in participating in the activities of the temple. The priest took a liking for him. Rasik was at liberty to visit the temple any time and to enter any of the rooms.

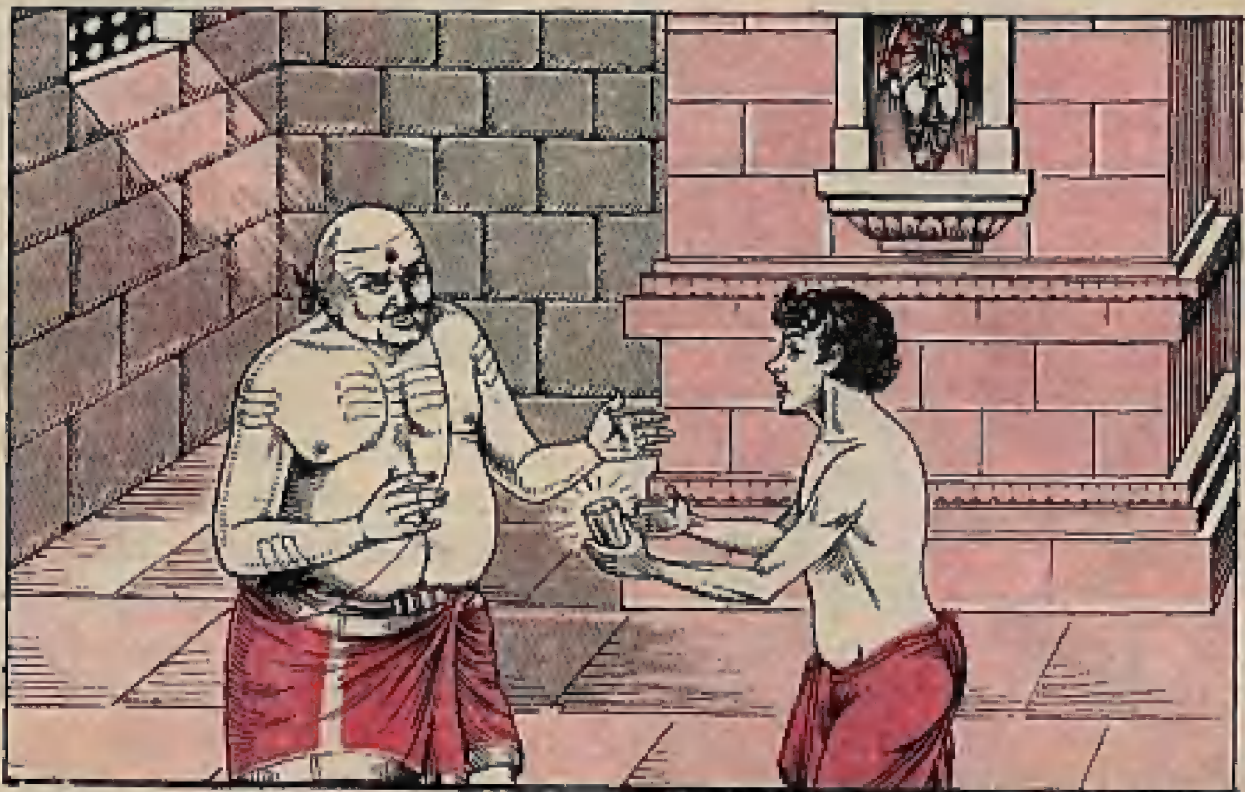
One day the priest found the deity's gold tumbler missing. From the circumstance it was obvious that none other than Rasik could have stolen it.


One afternoon the priest was seen counting a bundle of currency notes, "Where did you get so much money?" asked Rasik, curious.

"There is nothing to hide from you. I sold away a gold crown of the deity. Now, keep mum about it," said the priest, giving a note to Rasik.

Rasik ran away, but returned within ten minutes with the stolen tumbler and whispered to the priest, "Please sell this one to the same goldsmith and give me half of the price you receive."

The priest recovered the tumbler and asked Rasik never to enter the temple again.





*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

THE MAGIC CASKETS

Dark was the night and the sky was overcast with clouds. An eerie silence prevailed after a shower. Once in a while the silence was broken either by the howl of jackals or by thunder-claps.

In the intermittent lightning sometimes horrible faces were revealed. They seemed amazed at the king's valour. However they did not come too close to him.

But King Vikram advanced towards the lone banian tree in the cremation ground with determined steps. He climbed it and brought the corpse down.

But as soon as he began walking with the corpse on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "I wonder if you have undertaken this queer job at the asking of some hermit, for the hermits are quite whimsical. Take the case of Somadev. His behaviour towards two kings was rather strange. Let me tell you the story. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Somadev, a great hermit, lived in a forest that spread along the borders of two kingdoms. Dhanadutta and Dhiradutta were the kings over the two neighbouring lands. Although the two kings competed with each other on many things, their reverence for Somadev was equal. Whenever they faced any hard problem they met the hermit who never failed to give them the right solution.

Generally, the kings met the hermit individually. There had never arisen an occasion for both the kings to go to him together. The hermit had equal affection for both. In fact, it is because of the hermit that the two kings lived on friendly terms.

One day, out for hunting, the two kings met in the forest. Leaving their parties behind, both went to meet the hermit to pay him their respect.

The hermit was pleased to see them. He said, "It is very good that you came. I am about to fall into a trance. For five long years shall I remain in that state. You will not have the benefit of my advice. However, here are two small caskets. Take home one



each. If you face a crisis which proves too strong for you, then open the casket. The solution will come out of it. But be sure that before opening the casket you have tried all other means of solving your crisis. If you misuse the casket I will take it back from you when I come out of my trance."

The kings received the caskets with gratitude and returned to their palaces. Soon a severe drought befell both the kingdoms. Crops failed. The people grew panicky.

King Dhanadutta opened the hermit's casket. A million gold pieces surged out of it. The



king spent the wealth in buying food-stuff from distant lands for his subjects. Thus the drought which could have resulted in a devastating famine did not cause much hardship to his people.

But Dhiradutta, instead of opening the casket, mobilised all his resources, dug wells and canals and encouraged the people to grow new crops. He did not allow a morsel of food-grain to go out of his kingdom. The people had to experience hardship, but the crisis passed when the monsoon came next and all were happy.

Dhanadutta now desired to launch new projects in his land

so that his people grew more prosperous than Dhiradutta's people. In order to know how to proceed in the matter, he opened his casket again. This time the casket showed a writing: "Wait and see".

Next day a stranger met Dhanadutta and said, "I have invented a machine by which I can tell if there are precious minerals in your kingdom hidden under the earth, but on condition that I will own half of whatever is discovered."

Dhanadutta found in it an easy way to prosperity. He utilised the services of the stranger and found large mines of minerals.

A few days later the stranger met Dhiradutta and put forth the same proposal. But Dhiradutta was not willing to accept his condition.

Five years passed. The hermit woke up from his trance and paid a visit to the two lands. He saw the subjects of Dhanadutta prosperous and happy. But Dhiradutta's subjects, though not unhappy, were working hard for their prosperity.

The hermit asked both the kings to meet him with the caskets. He let them tell what

they had done with the caskets. Dhiradutta said that he had not used the casket at all. Dhanadutta narrated how he had used it twice and concluded, "The result is obvious. My subjects are happy."

But to Dhanadutta's surprise, the hermit asked him to return the casket while he allowed Dhiradutta to keep his.

The vampire paused and demanded of King Vikram, "Tell me, O King, why did the hermit take back the casket from one who had made its proper use? Knowing the answer if you choose to keep mum, your head shall roll off your shoulder."

Replied King Vikram: "Dhanadutta did not make proper use of the casket. He made no other effort to get over the crisis before opening the casket. He provided food to his subjects

all right, but that he did at the cost of their own zeal to try solve the problem. Thereby he made them lazy. Without any thought he allowed the stranger to own half of the minerals of his land. Thereby he deprived the future generation of the land's wealth.

"Dhiradutta, on the other hand, was confident that the casket will come to his rescue if his own efforts failed. He made best use of the casket by not using it! That is to say, the confidence he got from the casket was his strength. He did not sell away half of his land's minerals for immediate benefit. Hence, he deserved to keep the casket."

No sooner had King Vikram finished his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE WRONG CHOICE

Jagan was a burglar. He carried on his work for many years. But one day he was caught and severely beaten up. As a result he could neither run quickly nor climb high walls. He gave up burglary and went to settle down in a distant town with his sole child, a daughter.

A few years passed. He felt bored and decided to resume burglary. But now he needed an assistant. One day he met a small party of street acrobats. There was a smart teenager in the party who could jump to a great height by the help of a pole and could balance himself on the pole.

Jagan thought that the boy should prove an excellent assistant to him. He married his daughter to the boy and kept him in his own house. One night he led the boy to a rich merchant's mansion and asked him to scale the wall.

"To scale the wall, first of all I must have a pole, then my father must beat the drum, my uncle must whistle, two or three people must shout and clap their hands," explained the boy.





Rama's outburst before Sita stupefied all. Sita stood stunned and nonplussed. She could have never imagined of an occasion when Rama would behave with her in this manner.

With tears flowing down her cheeks, she at last spoke softly but forcefully: "O Prince, the words you have just uttered befit only one who is drowned in ignorance. They were unfit to be heard by me. Because I had been taken prisoner by the demon-king, it does not follow that I stand guilty. I had an impression that you knew me well. But now I am disillusioned. We have lived together for many years. Still you failed to understand me. How am I to hope that you will be just in

your evaluation of others? People can easily deceive you, I am afraid."

After a pause Sita continued, "O Prince, if Ravana touched me physically, that was not my fault. For that destiny is to blame. But the wicked demon has not been able to proceed further. I am the master of my consciousness. And my consciousness remains absolutely pure. If you had decided to forsake me, what was the necessity in sending Hanuman in search of me? I would have given up my life instantly had Hanuman conveyed your wish to me. No occasion would have arisen for the battle. You would not have lost so many of your friends and followers."



Sita then turned to Lakshmana and said, "I ask you to prepare a fire for me. It is impossible for me to live after such humiliation. Be good enough to oblige me."

Sita's decision, no doubt, gave a great shock to Lakshmana, but there was such a force in her command that he could not but act according to it. He looked at Rama with deep anguish and realised that Rama was in no mood to oppose Sita's wish.

The fire was duly made. As the flames grew brighter, Sita once walked around Rama and then, saluting the fire, said, "O

God of Fire! If I am truthful and pure, let it be proved by your treatment of me. I must come out of your embrace unharmed. The sun, the moon, the air, the day, the night, the morning, the evening and all the gods are the witnesses to my conduct and character. Let them decide my fate through you, O God of Fire!"

Without the slightest hesitation Sita then entered the fire. There prevailed an ominous silence which was broken by the wailing demon-women. The Vanaras and the demons too broke into screams. Rama stood like a statue, shedding tears continuously.

Suddenly the fire seemed to subside. Out of it emerged the God of Fire. Taking Sita in his arms, he left her outside the flames. The fire had not affected Sita, not even in her clothes and ornaments. All were struck with wonder.

"O Rama!" said the God of Fire, "Sita has never nursed any impure thought even in her dream. Ravana kept her a prisoner and threatened her with dire consequences if she did not yield to his proposal. But neither temptation nor fear could sway her even for a

moment. I commend you to accept her without the least hesitation."

Rama greeted the God of Fire and still in tears because of his own harshness towards Sita, said, "It is true that Sita is perfectly pure. However, the crude fact is that she had been a prisoner of the demon-king. Had I not made her face such a trial and emerge victorious, people would have later said that I was devoid of any sense of propriety. Sita has now proved herself pure before the world. I know, Ravana could not have done anything to Sita, the emanation of truth. Who else could have come out of fire unscathed? O God of Fire! I will obey you. Just as the radiant beams are inseparable from the sun, so also is Sita inseparable from me."

Suddenly a chariot brought King Dasharatha down from heaven. Rama and Lakshmana bowed to him. Said Dasharatha in a loving tone, "Rama! Separated from you, I find dry even the care bestowed on me by the gods in heaven. I am delighted to see you after your victory in the battle. I still regret the fact that you had to undergo untold hardship on



account of Kaikeyi. However, I realise that it is for the sake of destroying Ravana that the gods frustrated your coronation. Now return to Ayodhya and gladden the heart of your mother Kaushalya. Be crowned and live happily with your brothers."

"Sir, I am afraid, you have not yet excused mother Kaikeyi for her conduct. You are displeased with Bharata too. I plead with you to forgive and forget."

Dasharatha looked pleased. He turned to Sita and said "Please do not get angry with Rama." Thereafter he re-



turned to heaven.

Next to appear before Rama was God Indra who offered him a boon. Rama prayed for the resurrection of all his dead soldiers. Indra's boon instantly revived the dead Vanaras and bears. There was a hullabaloo of joy.

The night was spent peacefully and quietly. In the morning Vibhishana was seen busy with making arrangements for Rama's comfortable stay. But Rama told him that it was necessary for him to proceed to Ayodhya forthwith. Bharata had announced that he would jump into fire if Rama did not

turn up on the very next day after the completion of fourteen years.

Said Vibhishana, "O Ramachandra! I will see to it that you reach Ayodhya in a day. The flying chariot, *Pushpak*, which Ravana had forcibly taken away from Kuvera, is at your service. Now, please allow me to accord a warm hospitality to yourself, Sita Devi and Lakshmana."

"Vibhishana! Is it necessary to show me any further proof of your love after all that you have done for me to win the battle? I am quite eager to meet my mothers—Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, and our guru Viswamitra as well as the people of Ayodhya. Please place the flying chariot at my disposal."

The chariot was brought there. Said Vibhishana again, "O Ramachandra, my association with you will remain ever bright in my memory. I will remain ever grateful to you."

"Vibhishana! Can I ever forget your love for me? Commendable too is the service of the Vanaras and the bears. Please reward them and that will satisfy me."

Vibhishana was generous in

rewarding the soldiers of Rama. Soon Rama climbed the chariot, followed by Sita and Lakshmana. Rama, in his parting address to Sugriva, Vibhishana and the Vanaras, said, "You have served me with deep devotion and courage. Now that our mission is accomplished, you are free to go wherever you please. Sugriva, you may now return to Kiskindhya and rule your land happily. Vibhishana! Lanka has been entrusted to you. I wish you a happy rule. Now, please permit me to return to Ayodhya."

Said Sugriva, Vibhishana and the rest, "It is hard for us to be separated from you. Please allow us to accompany you to Ayodhya. We will participate in your coronation and pay our homage to Mother Kaushalya and then disperse."

"Great will be my joy to get you in my company. Welcome into the chariot," said Rama.

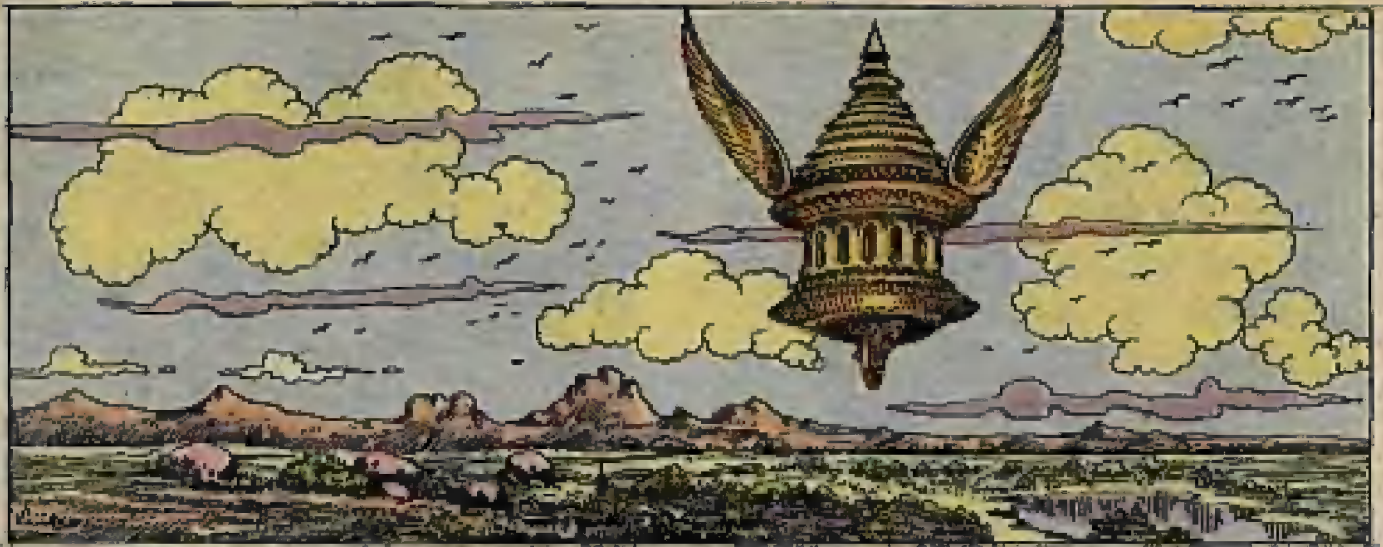
Sugriva, followed by the Vanara heroes, and Vibhishana, followed by his ministers, stepped into the chariot which now took off for Ayodhya. Rama pointed to Sita the situation of the golden city of Lanka atop the Trikuta hills, the blood-soaked battlefield, the



spots where Ravana and Kumbhakarna met their end as well as the barrage across the sea.

When the chariot was flying over Kiskindhya, Sita expressed a desire to take with her Tara and the wives of the Vanara heroes. Rama passed on her wish to Sugriva. The chariot landed and Sugriva announced Sita's wish to Tara and the rest of the Vanara women. Delighted, they boarded the chariot in the best of their clothes and ornaments and greeted Sita.

The chariot took off again. Rama now showed to Sita Mount Rushyamuk where he had first met Sugriva. Then he



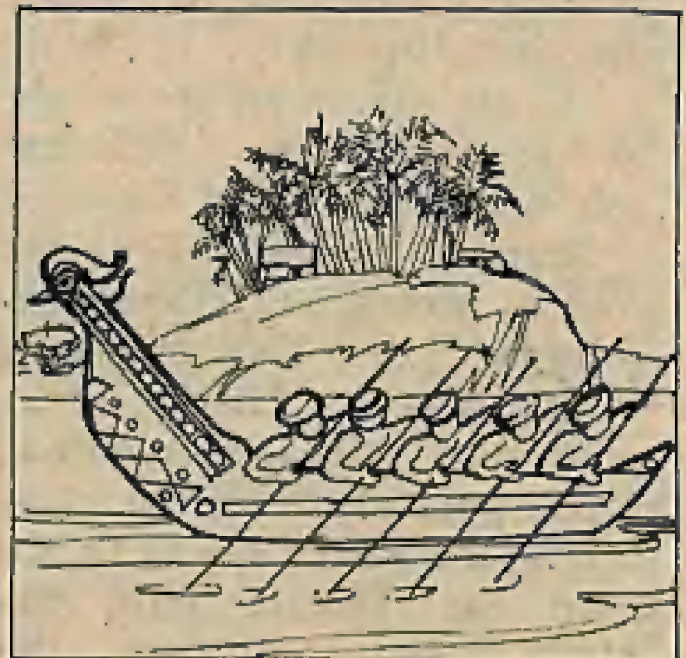
pointed at the beautiful lake Pampa and the place where the demon Kavandha had been killed.

The chariot flew over several other important spots like the Ashrams of the sage Atri and Bharadwaj, the dwelling of Guha, and Mount Chitrakut.

At last was seen Ayodhya on the horizon. Rama and Sita were thrilled beholding the magnificent towers of their charming city. Nature was at its best all around. Sugriva, Hanuman and others viewed the approach of the city with great joy and surprise.

CONT'D.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





THREE STRANGE FELLOWS

One day King Kantisen rode up to the frontier of his land. There was a vast meadow. At its centre stood a huge tree. It was a quiet noon and the king saw three fellows seated under the tree. They too saw the king, but they showed no respect to him.

The king asked one of them, more in surprise than in anger, "Should you not stand up when you see the king?"

The fellow looked at the king, but uttered no word. The fellow who sat next and who had only one eye, said, "O King, he speaks only when he gets angry, not otherwise. But whosoever hears him turns deaf and dumb."

The king was suddenly overtaken by an eerie fear.

"And, so far as I am concerned, the moment I open that eye of mine which I keep shut, you will grow totally blind!" said the fellow again.

"You must be wondering why I did not fold my hands to greet you," said the third fellow who sat with both his hands twisted backward. "The moment I raise my hands to salute anybody his head shall be shattered into pieces."

King Kantisen who had proved his bravery in several battles felt nervous now. He turned his horse to go away.

"Halt!" shouted the one-eyed fellow. "Listen to me or your horse will fall dead!"

The king stopped and asked timidly, "What do you want of me? Why don't you allow me



to go away? I have done no harm to you!"

The one-eyed fellow laughed. His friend who kept mum stared at the king menacingly and the fellow with his hands backward grinned like a ghost.

"Let us accompany you to your palace," the one-eyed fellow said.

"But why?" asked the king.

"We welcome no foolish question! Beware of our wrath," growled the fellow.

The king was obliged to trot on slowly. The three fellows walked, keeping pace with him. It was evening when they reached the palace. The king arran-

ged for their comfortable stay.

"Listen, O King," said the one-eyed fellow, the leader of the group, next morning, "do not go to your court tomorrow without first paying us a visit."

The palace-attendants as well as the minister were surprised to see the king paying so much attention to the strangers.

"Who are these fellows, my lord?" the minister asked the king in private.

"They are a strange lot with great power. They can do havoc if we do not obey them," said the king.

From the next day onward the king had to visit the strangers regularly before going to the court. The strangers asked for a number of facilities for themselves. Everything was given them. They exercised a great influence on the king and insisted that the king consult them on every issue which comes up before him. The king avoided his minister and began to be guided by the strangers. The whole administration ran in the wrong way. But nobody could help it.

One day the leader of the strangers told the king, "From tomorrow we will sit on the throne by turn, each for one

day."

"That is not possible," murmured the king.

"If not, our wrath will destroy your kingdom," warned the fellow.

"Well, then, let it be as you wish," agreed the king.

The king did not go to the court for three days during which the strangers, one after the other, ruled the kingdom.

When the king came to the court on the fourth day, he saw all the courtiers looking sad. The treasurer informed him that the royal treasury was almost empty, the wealth having been carried to a deserted house on the frontier of the kingdom. The king also learnt that it was the one-eyed stranger who sat on the throne on the first day. He ordered that everyone in the capital must keep his or her one eye shut. Because a young man was found moving about with both his eyes wide open, he was caught and one of his eyes was dug out.

It was the silent stranger's turn to sit on the throne on the second day. On his behalf, his two friends ordered that all in the capital must keep their mouths shut. Two passers by were heard talking. They



lost their tongues under the ruler's order!

The fellow who kept his hands backward sat on the throne on the third day. He ordered all to keep their hands backward. When he found a man disobeying him he ordered his hands to be cut off.

King Kantisen was overwhelmed with sorrow. He could hardly speak. He left the court soon with tears in his eyes.

The minister followed him. When he found the king alone, he said, "My lord! We must put an end to this senseless tyranny. Otherwise the people will rise in rebellion and there



will be great chaos."

"I understand. But is it not to save the kingdom from the wrath of the strangers that I have conceded to their whims? If angry, they can destroy us all!" said the king.

"If it is so, then certainly one with greater power can come to our rescue!" said the minister.

"True. But where is such a man?" asked the king.

"Why, my lord, have you forgotten about the hermit who is believed to be sitting in penance inside a cave in the forest for the last hundred years?" reminded the minister.

"But he will come out only

if a devotee sacrifices himself before him—as goes the legend" said the king.

"Right, my lord. I have found out such a devotee. Let us go to the cave. The devotee should be there, waiting for us," said the minister.

It was a moonlit night. The king and the minister stood before the cave. The minister looked around and said, "My lord, it seems the devotee who had promised to be here has failed us. Never mind. I will enter the cave and sacrifice myself so that the hermit can come to your rescue."

The king did not wish to lose his dear minister. But before he could stop him, the minister rushed into the cave.

The king had no other go than to wait. A few minutes later he heard a roaring voice and saw a bearded hermit emerging from the cave.

"Lead me to the strangers," said the hermit. Silently the king showed him the way.

As soon as they arrived at the palace the courtiers and the king's bodyguards pressed near them. The hermit went straight to that portion of the palace where the strangers resided. He shouted, asking them to come

out. Surprised, the three fellows appeared before the crowd.

"Ha! Ha!!" laughed the hermit and struck the one-eyed fellow on the head with his stick. "This fellow's powers are gone!" he announced. Instantly the crowd pounced on the fellow and he was taken prisoner.

The other two stranges were found shivering in fear. The hermit struck them in a similar way and announced that they too had become powerless. The crowd beat them up and they too were taken prisoners.

The hermit then lead the king into a room. When they stood face to face, the king was about to prostrate himself to him. But the hermit stopped him. Next, the king lamented the sacrifice of his minister. The hermit laughed and pulled

away his own beard and shed other disguises. There stood the minister!

The king was delighted. He then asked, "How did you muster such courage to challenge the strangers?"

"My lord, I knew from the beginning that they were three ordinary fellows. Secretly I gathered the information that they were notorious for their villainy in the neighbouring kingdom. They had been punished and turned out of that kingdom. One of them had lost his tongue, the other fellow one of his eyes. The third one's hands had been twisted. On arrival in our kingdom they met you at such a moment when you were alone and somehow you were frightened by them. Your fear was their only strength!"





A Direction from the Deity

In a certain small town lived a wealthy trader. He had three trusted sons and three dutiful daughters-in-law. The sons worked hard at his direction. So did the daughters-in-law, for he was against employing any servant for the household works.

He was not in favour of spending after physicians either. Of course, so far as he was concerned, he enjoyed sound health, following certain disciplines. Going for bath was the only time when he was obliged to leave behind him the keys of the steel trunk in which he kept his money and the room in which the trunk was kept. He left the keys with the eldest son whom he trusted most.

One day, while going out for his ritual bath, he found that all his sons had gone out on important business. He worried

for a while about the safe-keep of the keys and then gave them to the youngest daughter-in-law. "I leave these in your custody because of my trust in you," he whispered to her.

But he had only taken a few steps when he was beset with the thought—what if the youngest daughter-in-law betrays him? He returned home and called the eldest daughter-in-law and whispered to her, "I have left the keys with the youngest. Keep an eye on her!"

But his misgivings were not over. He returned again, after he had taken a few steps, and called the middle daughter-in-law to his side and said, "Watch the movement of the other two."

Now he proceeded to the river without any more worry.

The youngest daughter-in-law was eager to open the steel

trunk as soon as the trader was out of sight. But whenever she went near the room she saw the other two watching her. But they were intimate friends and looking at each other, they laughed simultaneously. Then they opened the room and the trunk together and brought out three thousand rupees. Upon his return from the river, the father-in-law saw them doing the household chores as usual. The youngest daughter-in-law duly handed him over the keys.

When, after their lunch and rest, the trader and his sons went away to their shop, the three young ladies visited the bazar and bought three fine

sarees and some ornaments for themselves. In the evening the trader observed them wearing new clothes and asked how they got them.

The second daughter-in-law stepped forward and answered, "Father, something strange happened this afternoon. A vendor of sarees insisted that we buy three sarees from him. When we pleaded that we had no money, he said, 'My daughters, you forget whose daughters-in-law you are! No other women in this world are blessed with such a father-in-law. Choose your sarees now. Your father-in-law will pay me all right even if I die and depart



to either hell or heaven.' But we were hesitant."

The youngest daughter-in-law stepped forward and said, "What happened thereafter is a miracle. The door of the treasure room opened up a little and a golden hand, holding three thousand rupees, was seen extending at us. And said a charming voice, I am an emanation of Goddess Lakshmi, the presiding deity of this house. The vendor who holds your father-in-law in such great esteem should not go unpaid. Here is some money. Buy the sarees and buy anything, else you wish with the surplus. The hand vanished after giving us the money."

"Yes, father," said the eldest daughter-in-law, "I would not have believed this had I not seen the happening myself."

The trader kept quiet. He

could not get a wink of sleep at night. He thought, "I was away only for two hours leaving the keys with the daughters-in-law. The result is, I lost three thousand rupees. A day will come when I have to depart leaving the keys behind permanently. How will these ladies use the money then? Better I give them the opportunity to satisfy their wishes from now. Otherwise their suppressed desires, when let loose all on a sudden, will pay havoc with the wealth. However, there is one thing to be happy about—the daughters-in-law have strong, unity among themselves. Let it be lasting."

The trader's behaviour changed. He spent liberally for the happiness of his family. Gradually he felt inspired to spend for the welfare of the society too.



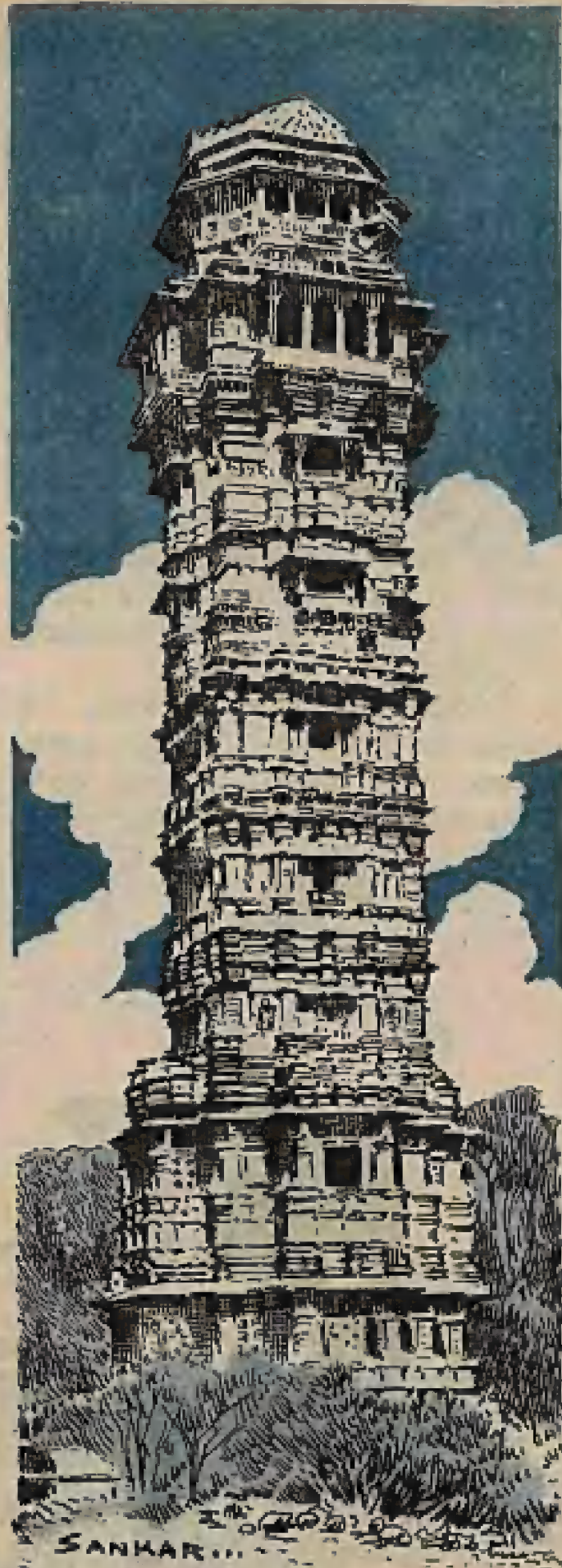
MONUMENTS OF INDIA

THE TOWER OF VICTORY AT CHITTOR

Chittor was the fortified capital of Mewar, once a powerful Rajput kingdom in Rajasthan. The rulers of Mewar were famous as the Maharanas.

Chittor was attacked by Alladin Khilji in 1303, Sultan Bahadur Shah in 1534 and by Akbar in 1568. The Rajputs protected or recovered their fort with great valour.

In 1440 Maharana Kumbha defeated Sultan Mehmood Shah Khilji of Malwa. He began building the famous Tower of Victory in 1448 inside the fort and completed it in ten years. This nine-storeyed tower which is 122 feet high and has 157 steps to reach the top, is as marvellous for its majestic structure as for the beautiful sculpture it contains, with figures of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, among other gods and goddesses.



A MATTER OF COURTESY

There was a young man who had been taught by his teacher to be elaborately courteous. The young man must prostrate himself to his teacher before speaking. And speak he could only when the venerable teacher looked at him and nodded.

One day the teacher was taking a stroll on the riverside when the student met him and duly greeted him. But a long time passed before the teacher signalled him to speak.

"Sir!" said the student, "I came to inform you that your house was burning. But now I must correct my grammar and

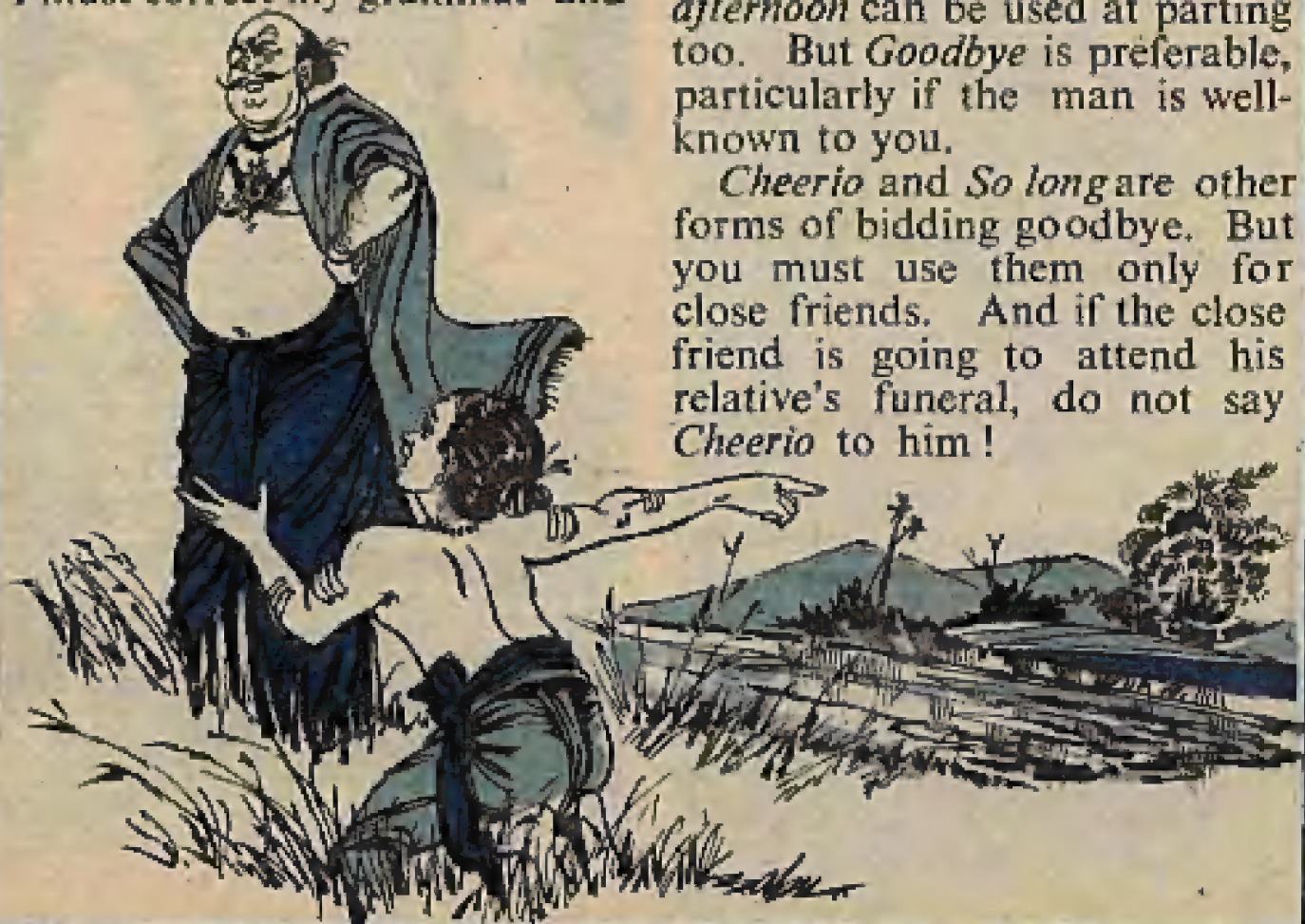
say that your house is burnt!"

We cannot afford to be that courteous! But, even when in a hurry we ought to utter the right greeting for the occasion.

Well, what do you say when, in the evening or at night, you meet a friend or acquaintance in the street but you have no time to stop? Say just *Good night*. But if you meet in order to talk, say *Good evening* first and say *Good night* when you leave.

If you are to greet someone during the day say *Good morning* or *Good afternoon* depending on the time. Say *Goodbye* when you leave. In fact, *Good morning* and *Good afternoon* can be used at parting too. But *Goodbye* is preferable, particularly if the man is well-known to you.

Cheerio and *So long* are other forms of bidding goodbye. But you must use them only for close friends. And if the close friend is going to attend his relative's funeral, do not say *Cheerio* to him!





LET US KNOW

What is the reason for King Vikram trying to carry off the corpse with the vampire from its dwelling, the tree?

Rupal Kapadia, Kitwe, Zambia

According to the original *Betalapanchavimsati* or "Twenty-five Tales of a Vampire", which is a part of the *Kathasaritsagara*, the world's oldest work of fiction, King Trivikramasena, popularly known as Vikram, was requested by a mendicant to fetch the corpse for him. The mendicant wished to perform some supernatural rite by appeasing the vampire that possessed the corpse. For the completion of his rite he planned to sacrifice the king too, after he had brought the corpse.

It was necessary that the king should carry the corpse silently. But the vampire made the king speak everytime and gave him the slip. However, the vampire finally took a great liking for the king and warned him about the mendicant's motive.

The alert king killed the mendicant before the mendicant had any chance to fulfil his design. As a result, the supernatural benefit which the mendicant was to gain went to the king.

The new tales of King Vikram and the Vampire you are reading is *Chandamama's* gift to you.



Where and when were the playing cards first used?

Nimish J. Thakore, Ahmedabad,
Subodh Lele, Bombay.

According to a legend the playing cards were invented for the wife of Emperor Seun-Ho of China, in early 12th century. But there is no evidence for this. In fact, it has not been possible to determine in which country the playing cards were first used. All we know is, they suddenly became popular in several countries—Germany, Italy, France, Spain—in early 14th century. Some trace its origin to ancient India.

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a postcard and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of February. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the April '78 issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the Photo Caption Contest)



The king sat for dinner. The cook, while going to place a dish before him, spilled some curry and soiled the royal dress.

The king looked at him angrily. The poor cook was seen trembling with fear. But what he did next quite puzzled all. He emptied the whole dish on the king's dress!

"What does this mean?" the furious king demanded.

"My lord, I did this keeping your good in view," stammered out the cook.

"How?" asked the bewildered king.

"My lord, from your look I guessed that you were going to put me to death. I was afraid that people might criticise you for putting me to death for a small mistake of mine. So, I poured the dish on you to justify your action. On the other hand, if you pardon me, people are sure to sing your glory for your pardoning me despite such audacious conduct of mine!"

The king laughed and said, "Well, boy, I choose the second course. I pardon you."

Result of Story Title Contest held in December Issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Mr. K. N. Rajkumar, C/o. G. N. Gopinath

Sub Post Master, Industrial Suburb P.O.,

MYSORE 570 008.

Winning Entry—THE LORD AND THE BARD

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. P. D. Ashtekar

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions ? Could be single words, are several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th FEBRUARY
- Winning captions will be announced in APRIL issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name, address, age and post to :

**PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST
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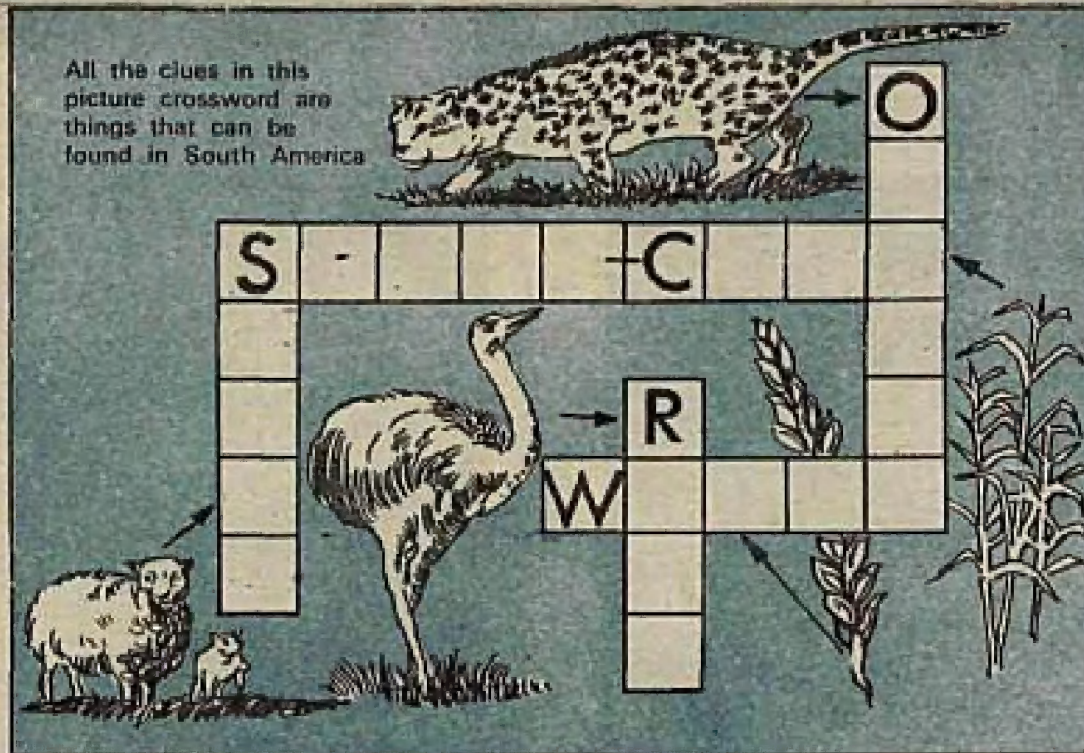
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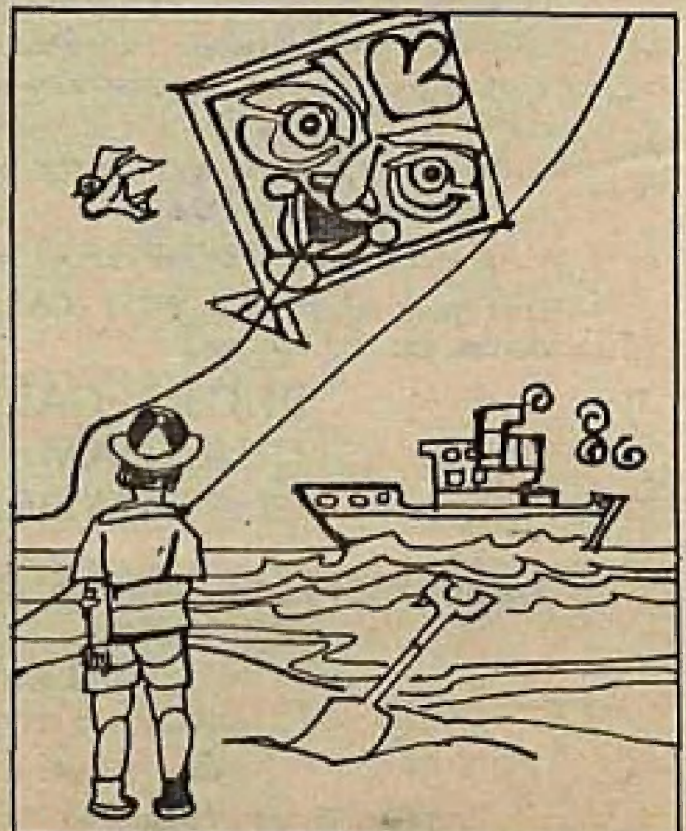
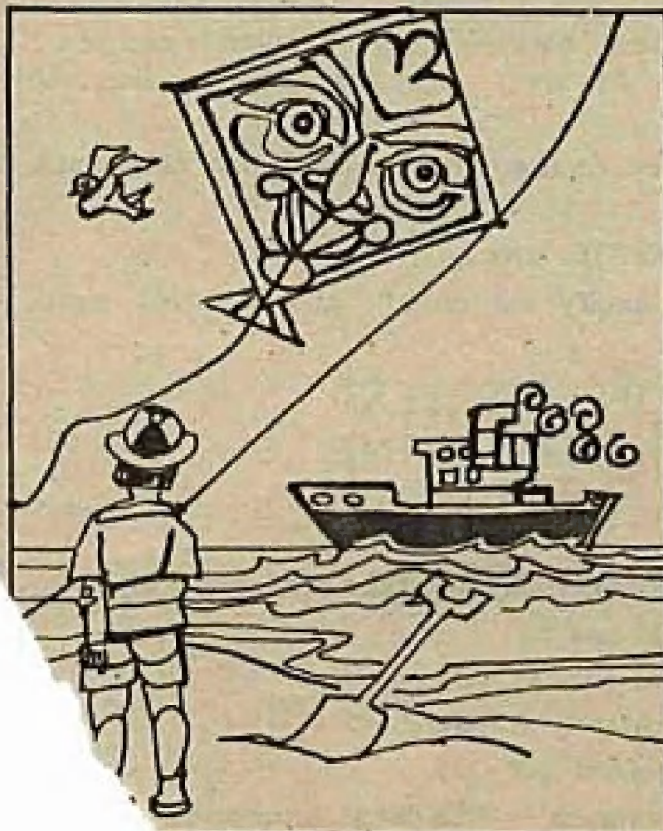
Winning Entry—'Beaming Adolescence'—'Budding Innocence'

PUZZLE TIME

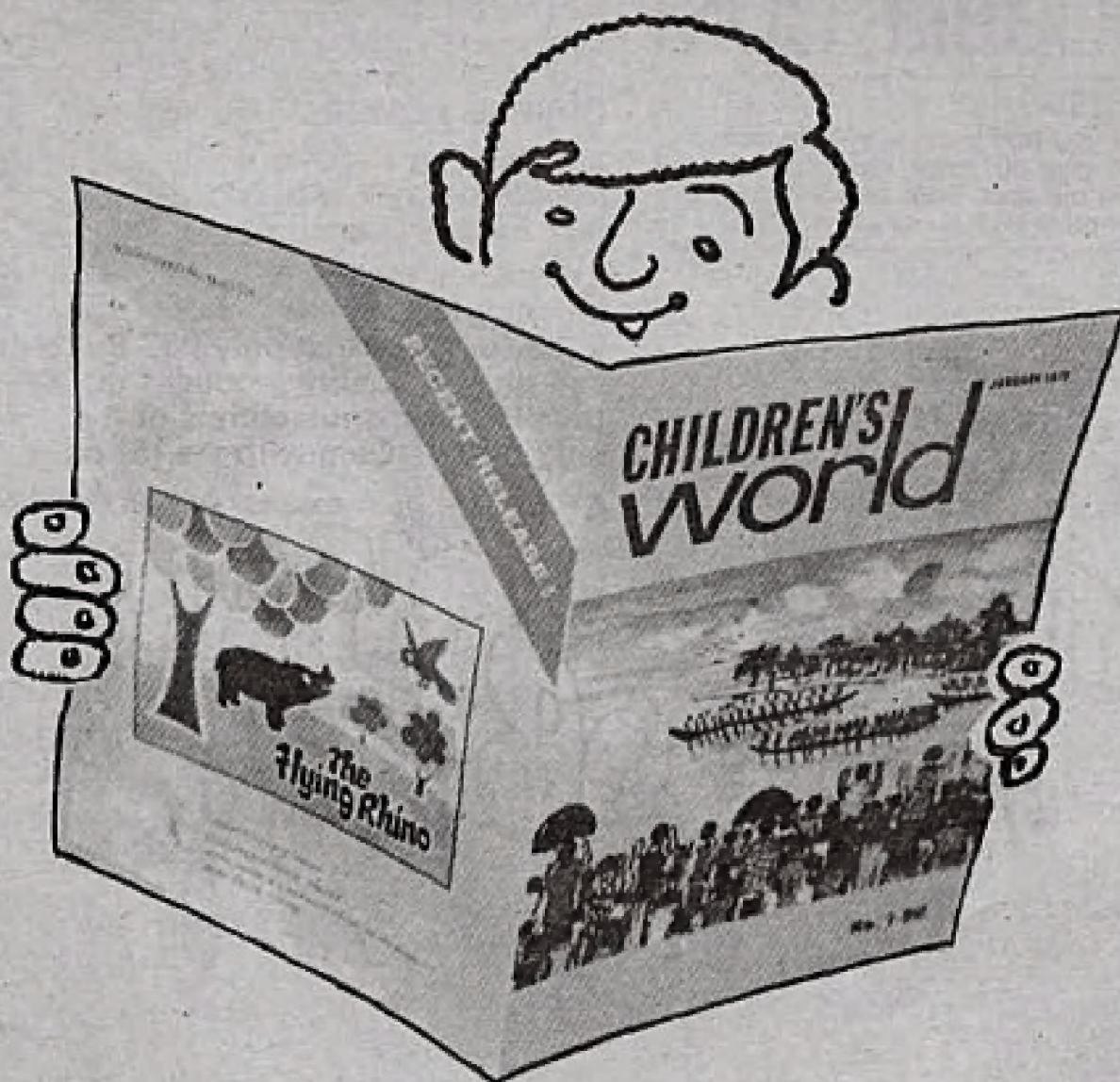


ANSWER ACROSS: Sugar-Cane; Wheat; DOWN: Sheep; Rhea; Ocelot.

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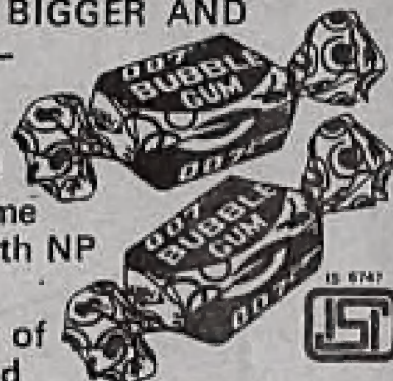
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